THE POETRY REVIEW

33 PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON W.1

EDITED BY JOHN GAWSWORTH, F.R.S.L.

No. 3 **JUNE-JULY, 1949** Vol. XL

★

CONTENTS:

PAGE

Editorial 159

POETRY

Plainsong: Eden Phillpotts 161

Symbol of Provence: Rachel Annand Taylor 161

The Grave: Wilfrid Gibson 162

Sky-chosen: Herbert Palmer 162

Integration: Martin Armstrong 163

Slumber-time for Earth's Children: R. H. Mottram 163

Incident in November: John Redwood Anderson 164

When—: Lord Gorell 165

Ride a Centaur, Lady! Sir Shane Leslie, Bt. 165

A Diary in Youth: Frances Cornford 166

Memories: Clifford Bax 166

Tramp: Huw Menai 167

Prospect of Meeting in Two Days: Viola Meynell 167

Academic Epitaph: E. H. W. Meyerstein 168

The Syrian Dancer: Richard Aldington 168

In a Cornish Garden: Hugh MacDiarmid 169

The Novice to Her Lover: V. Sackville-West, C.H. 170

All Souls' Day: L. Aaronson 170

Workhouse Funeral: Thomas Moult 171

The Chink: Robert Graves 172

The Rut: P. D. Cummins 173

Ballad of Three Rivers, From Lorca: Roy Campbell 173

Fairford Church: Stella Gibbons 174

Country Churchyard: Stanley Snaith 175

PAGE

The Salmon: Vernon Watkins 175

In a Foreign Hospital: Bernard Spencer 177

The Legacy: Alan Rook 177

Holiday Verse—Diano Marina: Bernard Gutteridge 178

The River Bridge: Laurence Whistler 179

The Desert: Patric Dickinson 179

John Clare: John Heath-Stubbs 180

Ankor: John Bayliss 181

The Vision: Iain Fletcher 182

Poem for D: Erik de Mauny 184

Dirge on Parting: Maurice Carpenter 184

PROSE

The Value of Poetry by Stephen Graham 185

W. E. Henley: Twenty-Five New Poems edited by W. M. Parker .. 188

Rimbaud—and Two Homely Muses by Roy Campbell 199

Poetry in Australasia (ii) by Philip Lindsay 202

Tradition and Change by William Kean Seymour 208

Phoenixes Too Infrequent by P. D. Cummins 213

Shorter Reviews by Iain Fletcher and John Waller 216

Letters to the Editor 219

The Greenwood Prize Report by G. Rostrevor Hamilton 221

The 1948 Greenwood Prize Poem by Robert Gittings 223

The Premium Award by Thomas Moult 228

Announcements 232

LONDON COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Incorporated

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, LONDON, W.1

Director—Dr. H. BROMLEY-DERRY, M.V.O., Mus.D. Dublin, Mus.B. Oxon et Dunelm, F.S.A.

Elocution, Speech-training, Poetry-reading and all kindred Subjects form an important section of the College curriculum.

The College provides complete Courses in all Musical Subjects and in Elocution and Speech-training leading to the Licentiate Teacher's Diploma, which is recognised by the Ministry of Education for qualified teacher status in Primary and Secondary Schools.

Scholarships and Local Exhibitions are offered annually.

The examinations Syllabus covers all grades from Preliminary to Advanced Senior, also the Diplomas of Associate, Licentiate and Fellow.

Teaching Prospectus and Syllabus of the Examinations may be had from THE SECRETARY.

OPEN LETTER TO THE READER

Fortieth Anniversary Year,
May, 1949

Sir, or Madam,

The formation of a United States of Poetry, anywhere and at anytime, is a difficult ideal to attain, particularly without the previous clinching finality of a chastening Gettysburg against closed minds. Hence, a vision and patience far beyond any single editor's, the patience in fact of a Lincoln of the lyre, is needed to win all secessionists to union by sound precept and not by egregious invitation.

Lately the Editor of *The Poetry Review* has been reminded of this, in a moderate way. Although there is a school of thought which subscribes to a dictum he often heard quoted by that great prose-poet, the late Arthur Machen: "Never take people behind the scenes", he does not, himself, rightly or wrongly, accept that view; and, having already published two Open Letters, embarks here upon a third which still leaves the Green Room door ajar.

For, the fact is, that within the last six months he has received half-a-dozen letters denouncing him as a "modernist" and his policy as "modernistic"—as he thinks, strangely—and, despite the fact that Mr. Lawrence Durrell, in a recent *World Review,* somewhat scornfully described him as "a Georgian in our midst, still adhering to the *criteria* of the movement which, for all its lack of praise in high-brow quarters is still very much alive, and revolves about *The Poetry Review*".

Now, the Editor would maintain that both these assessments fall far short of the truth.

If invited, he would describe himself as a "contemporary", his editorial policy as "catholic", and, if questioners went so far into the country of curiosity, his own verse as "lyrical". As the proof of the pudding is always in the eating, he has re-read his last two numbers of *The Poetry Review* to see how far he had permitted "modernist" diction into his anthologies of verse there. He can trace a faint flavour of it in but six poems out of more than sixty, discovering it only in the intensely individual contributions of Messrs. MacDiarmid, Rook, Madge, Barker, Dyment and Dickinson; but these in their execution are certainly far from being formless or ill-designed. It would seem then, that this charge of a major "modernistic" tendency being apparent in *The Poetry Review* was quite invalid.

That accepted, why should the matter deserve mention, especially when this handful of letters of protest to the Editor was heavily out-

weighed in sheer *avoirdupois* by an overwhelming bulk of written support for his policy, congratulations on his accepting office, and hopes for the journal's future?

Surely, the grievance should be aired because such ill-founded criticism exhibits a dogmatic narrow-mindedness which militates against the ideals of tolerance and poetic union, even against the necessary individualism of poets? For poets should be individualists, *must* be individualists *first,* and only united in sympathy and common respect *after* performance.

The United States of Poetry—that is still the peaked transfiguration towards which, faltering step after step, this journal purposefully mounts . . . The future will prove with what success.

But, now, to the present. In this, the third and last of our Fortieth Anniversary numbers, we happily welcome some old contributors (a few of whom the press last year classed malcontent), some score of recent supporters, and some dozen new. It has been a privilege to print them all, but most particularly pleasant was it to receive a new lyric from Miss V. Sackville-West, C.H., who, as veteran members will recall, won *The Poetry Review* competition for "A Sonnet on the Sea" just over a quarter of a century ago! (*Pace,* Mrs. Nicolson, Clio sometimes must seem ungallant!) And it seems of good augury, too, that new poems have been extracted from Miss Stella Gibbons, Mr. R. H. Mottram and Mr. Clifford Bax, all of whom have been silent for too long, and that Lord Gorell and Mr. Huw Menai should proffer recent work.

Mr. W. M. Parker's discovery, in Henley's Centenary Year, of twenty-five unpublished poems by that invicible, may also be regarded as particularly happy and well-timed. No future *Collected Poems* of "Long John Silver" can afford to be without them and, no doubt, they will be of great biographical service to Mr. John Connell, who is now engaged upon an authoritative *Life of Henley.*

And, here at last, is the Greenwood Prize Poem for 1948, "Acis and Galatea" by Mr. Robert Gittings, the selection of Mr. G. Rostrevor Hamilton, seeing print ahead of its publication in a volume announced for the Autumn. The "runner-up", by Mr. Maurice Carpenter, will appear in the next issue.

Finally, I would close with an appeal to all members. As the pound goes down, membership must go up, if the budget of the Poetry Society is to be balanced victoriously. So, let every member secure one applicant to fill in the form on page 231; and the Hon. Treasurer will smile again.

Sir, or Madam,
I remain, etc.,
Yours,
JOHN GAWSWORTH.

PLAINSONG

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

From promised lands that radiant lie
Free and unfrontiered, waiting still
Their pioneers, today shall fly,
With timely greeting and goodwill,
A might of music on the wing
To quicken hope and set our heartstrings echoing.

The Golden Rule inspires that rede—
Mandate of everlasting worth—
Our sovereign prescript, signal need
Of all consistories on earth;
But lacking, then no human schemes
For unity and trust are more than idle dreams.

Pray for this midget world, our home
And birthright in the vast of space,
That sons of morning yet to come
Shall wipe the sorrow from her face,
When giant master-spirits plan
Peace, the sole pilgrims' road to Brotherhood of Man.

SYMBOL OF PROVENCE

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

Far in the burning blue a mountain
  Forgets some Victory of old:
Under the cypress-tree a fountain
  Sleeps in its rim of honey-gold,
Its rim of beauty faintly breded,—
  Acanthus leaves, and fauns, and girls:
Thereon a peacock-prince unheeded
  His disk of emerald unfurls.
Ah! Let no soul nor sight unholy
  Jar the great magic of this trance
Where Greece and Rome have smouldered slowly
  Into the sacred soil of France.—
Let hardly a goddess or a ghost go by,
Hardly a waft of roses and a sigh.

THE GRAVE

WILFRID GIBSON

Although gravedigging was his job, they offered
To dig his wife's for him; but instantly
His sad old eyes to anger flashed as he
Curtly declined the officious help they proffered:

For he who had done things for her without number
To ease her ailing heart of worry and care
Felt it but fitting that he should prepare
With his own hand the bed for her last slumber.

SKY-CHOSEN

HERBERT PALMER

I told them an ancient story
Of a worm that crawled to glory
And a tossed soul starwards drifted,
Wind-blown from a darkened lane.
But the lowest shall be uplifted
When the wheat from the tares is sifted,
For the gleaners are not human,
Though the reaping hooks complain.

I blew them a strong sou'-wester
Of a butterfly's ancestor,
And the downy breast high-gifted
Hills over the beaks' domain.
But the meanest shall be uplifted
When the wings from the legs are sifted,
For the gleaners are not human,
Though the reaping hooks complain.

Then an owl-head muttered, chuckling,
"A swan from an ugly duckling?
And Lazarus skyward shifted?
You may tell those tales again."
Yes, the lowest shall be uplifted
When the wheat from the tares is sifted,
For the gleaners are not human,
And the stars do not complain.

INTEGRATION

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

Staring into the pool Narcissus found
A strange inverted welkin where the sun
Dawned in the west, touched nadir at the noon,
And rose to set against the eastern bound;

And trees, root-anchored near him in the ground,
That plunged head-downwards, whose dim branches spun
A leafy net for shapes silver and dun
Gliding half-seen on wings that made no sound.

And, staring still, he saw a face unknown
With eyes that questioned his, then closer gazed
And saw the face lean upwards, then reached down
An arm and saw a ghostly arm upraised.
Then hand touched hand and, suddenly amazed,
Known self and self unknown were fused to one.

SLUMBER-TIME FOR EARTH'S CHILDREN

R. H. MOTTRAM

There will be weeping, when we have to go
Like tired children summoned from their play
Who cry: "Why must we, when we love it so,
The endless frolic of the summer's day?"

Lingering in the ever deepening shade,
We make believe to loiter here and there,
Eternity, our old wise nurse to evade
Till our turn comes to hush us and prepare.

The shadows lengthen and the light grows dim.
Our day is but a link in chain of years
That, stretched beyond the far horizon's rim,
How long, how heavy and how strong appears.

Only the happy find the yielding hard,
Only the blest relinquish with a sigh,
So much of worth and beauty to discard
And beg no bartered guerdon in reply.

There will be weeping. But the tears will cease,
A silence fall, as, meekly rendering
The mortal longing, we shall be at peace,
A deep and lovely sleep shall be our ending.

INCIDENT IN NOVEMBER

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

Mildly blew the gentle November wind;
clear was the sky, save, low down in the south-east, thin
banks of cloud.

As I went my way walking, again and again I paused and looked
across the valley,
over the steep fields that sloped away from my feet,
over the green river-pastures and the winding river
—the green pastures of Edeyrnion and the Dyfrdwy's winding
stream—
looked across to the long lines of the Berwyns and their
folded masses:
for never had I seen the familiar beauty of the hills so
unfamiliar, so beautiful!
the soft grey of the dark rock-faces (What dream beguiled
you then, implacable rocks?), the sombre brown fire,
the smoulder and smoke of the turned leaves of the birch-trees,
the scattered clusters of the silver birch that clothed the
sides of the hills,
smoke in the shadows, smouldering fire where the light of the
sun still touched them—
and again and again on my walk, I paused to look.

And once, as thus I paused—motionless as any tree by the
road-side—
a little brown bird came fluttering and perched on a twig
of the brown November hedge,
(and the twig swayed lightly with its light impact, and then
again was still);
I could have touched the brown bird with my hand, so near
was he, so quiet, so intimate!
And he opened his beak and spoke . . . But alas, little bird!
I am no Siegfried that I should understand your speech.
And I, too, would have spoken—a brief salutation and blessing . . .
But alas! I am no Francis that you should understand my words.

WHEN—

LORD GORELL

When we are young, we are so clever,
Our thought a free, quick-silver ball:
Care comes—but briefly; visions call.
We think that Youth will last for ever—
Or do not think of it at all:
It is a wealth past evil powers,
Vastly, inevitably ours.

When we are in the midst of living,
We surge against the shifting tides;
We stand erect, we choose our sides,
Loving, rebuffing, getting, giving:
High on the mast our lantern rides.
We labour, and, like sunshine, zest
Lights up the waters of our quest.

When we are old, we see Time's finger
Steadily beckon to the great beyond:
Life's book lies open as a lesson conned;
Things past and present strangely linger
Fastened together in a single bond.
Regrets, fulfilments jostle Pain—
And we must smile and start again.

RIDE A CENTAUR, LADY!

SIR SHANE LESLIE, BT.

Fair Lady, in need of a nag,
Now that horses are pickled in pies:
If you can't hire a zebra or stag,
Try a Centaur—and feel how he flies!

Approach but Elysian-bred
And pretend you're admiring his tail:
For he likes to be flattered or fed
Like all that is human and male.

Then mount him and steady your grip
And tell him his face is a dream:
He will galop his best without whip
For the sake of a woman's esteem.

By your voice make him gambol and go,
For a Centaur's a Lady's best ride:
To the top of the Hunt or the Show
Your riding will prick him with pride.

But remember 'twas Nessus who gave
His blood-soaking shirt as a charm
To the wife of his slayer to save
Till the hour that her heart needed balm:

And the blood of a Centaur is death,
More deadly to man than a skirt:
For Hercules gave up his breath
In the poison that passed from that shirt.

A DIARY IN YOUTH

FRANCES CORNFORD

This is the hour I need not pretend;
I need not consider enemy or friend:
I write my thoughts for no human eyes,
No-one can praise them, or blame them, or despise.

Outside my window, no detailed daylit place
But the indivisible darkness of space:
And no-one can criticize—or interfere
With the strange thoughts I write down here.

MEMORIES

CLIFFORD BAX

The Past goes glittering through my imagination,—
Scenes in old empires European and Asian,
Nor only a pageant of armies, or kings and queens,
But humble happinesses and quiet scenes.

Almost I hear those mournful Egyptian ditties,
And taste of life in Grecian or Chinese cities
Or in a Tuscan hill-town, savouring each
As a man distinguishes apple and pear and peach.

Little things known in childhood haunt us for ever;
And someday, should I remember our century's fever,
I may see glimpses of life as it is, and yet
Not Churchill or Munich's violent marionette.

Imagination will waft to me then, it may be,
A sense of some fair girl serene with her baby;
A crowd at Kennington Oval, dodging the showers;
Music long lost, or a friend arranging her flowers.

TRAMP

HUW MENAI

I watched the woodsmoke rise,
  And as I crossed the lea
I saw with curious eyes
  A tramp there brewing tea.

He had allowed the grass
  To grow under his feet:
Cool in the luscious mass,
  Far from the dust and heat,

While others, slaves to Pride,
  Fine fellows of the frown,
Sweated about and died
  Early to keep it down!

PROSPECT OF MEETING IN TWO DAYS

VIOLA MEYNELL

Tomorrow I can say "Tomorrow!"
Tomorrow, moon of days, will borrow
Light from Apollo's blaze,
Light from the day of days.
One day's the sun, one moon, and oh
How bright a star is even today!
Today's the day when I can say
"Tomorrow I can say 'Tomorrow!' "

ACADEMIC EPITAPH

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN

Here lies a don, while living, dead,
Who starved his heart to feed his head
By annotations on a text
Corrupt at start, and left more vext.
His pupils, such as he could find,
But used their eyes to turn them blind,
Without once lighting on a fact
To make their monographs exact.
For truth he did not greatly care;
He gained his point and kept his Chair.

THE SYRIAN DANCER

(Copa Syrisca—attributed to Vergil)

TRANSLATED BY

RICHARD ALDINGTON

A slim Greek diadem about her hair,
Syrisca dances, and the tavern air
Grows tenser as her vibrant breasts and thighs
Kindle the lust lurking in watchful eyes,
And that lithe body no man seeing forgets
Throbs to the rhythm of her castanets.

"Weary with heat, why linger ye outside?
Enter and drink and rest; the choice is wide,
For here are casks, and wine-cups shaped like flowers,
Roses, and flutes, and strings, and shade-dim bowers,
Arcadian caves where ever sweetly blows
The shepherd's pipe at lips that mock the rose;
Bright wine poured bubbling from the well-pitched jar,
A rippling brook that echoes from afar,
And violet crowns or crocus for your head,
Or snow-white roses twining with the red,
Fresh lilies gemmed with river-drops like dew
Gathered in baskets by our girls—for you.
Here too are cheeses dried in webs of rush,

Red plums as glowing as the Autumn's blush,
Apples and hazels, chestnut hearts that shine,
And Love and Ceres and the God of Wine;
Here blood-red mulberries and clustered grapes,
And dark-green, hanging gourds' fantastic shapes,
And that vast membered Guardian of our lands
Whose scythe of willow-wood so harmless stands.

"Pilgrim, have pity on your sweating beast
Whom Vesta loves—spare him, and join the feast.
Now from the burning sun the lizards flee,
While harsh cicadas shrill from bush and tree.
Be wise, drink deeply from this mighty flask;
Or crystal cups are yours, do you but ask.
Ah! rest from toil, where shade from vines is shed,
And bind this rosy chaplet round your head,
Gather soft kisses from your girl's sweet face—
And death to him who scorns this lowly place!
What! will this garland charm your ash-white bones?
Will it rejoice you under sad cold stones?"

Wine! Wine and dice! And Conscience, be thou dumb!
Death plucks my ear: 'Live while you may. I come.'

IN A CORNISH GARDEN

(For Valda)

HUGH MACDIARMID

All the flowers in this garden look
Like isolated moods of yours, particular memories of you,
Gestures and smiles of yours that have taken root
And flourish here forever.
The brilliant red super-giant El Monte asters,
Double petunias in fringed, ruffed, and laciniate forms,
Rose of Heaven and Little Star petunias,
And, among the roses, the flaming yellow
And copper-toned Feu Pernet-Ducher, the coral-petaled
Carrie Jacobs Bond, the orange-overcast
Carillon, and the brilliant deep-red Dickson's Centennial.
Then the sweet-scented Golden Gleam nasturtiums,
The great clusters of glorious fiery red Russian lilies—,
Like the reflection of my own heart's blood—

And the rainbow show of giant zinnias,
Burnt orange, deep salmon, rose and purple
(And these be your words, beloved,
In so far as earth-speech may avail,
That sight or sound of you always
May conjure up without fail—
Coinnealta, solasta, croidhearg, cunbalach,
Eireachdail, taiceil, gloir-ghleasta, fionfluil, gniomh-luaineach,*
And for the phrase that matches you best
"The mile-great sheaf-like blast of purple-glowing and red flames,"
Or Meredith's "her pomp of glorious hues, her revelry of ripeness, her kind smile,"
The "radiance rare and fathomless"
That Hardy won in Cornwall too).
Doughty loved Cornwall and spent his honeymoon here,
And W. H. Hudson, and Stephen Mackenna,
The translator of Plotinus—even as I.

* *These Scottish Gælic words mean bright, brilliant, blood-red, constant, handsome, staunch, of tuneful speech, of deft deed, and "wine-blood" (i.e., noble.)—H.M.*

THE NOVICE TO HER LOVER

V. SACKVILLE-WEST, C. H.

Why must you follow me
When I come to the threshold of this holy place?
My resolution falters and it seems death to enter
When, turning back, I look upon your face.

I could renounce you when I lay alone;
I ran from you as from a hungry light
Into the gentle, the infinite, the healing
Clemency of the night.

I crave an eloquence that is not words,
I seek fulfilment in the kiss of stone,—
But you, you come with your mouth and your dark hair
And at your feet a leaf that the wind has blown.

ALL SOULS' DAY

L. AARONSON

What Beauty means Imagination knows,
And we are summer's children when the rose
Dies in its image by the empty lake,
And ghost returns to ghost as the light goes,
And to ourselves at last we truly wake.

Today I'm set for winter nakedly.
As once in Eden summer made me free,
Because I needed nothing but desire,
Now winter's white awareness burns in me
And summer rises from the icy fire.

Summer becomes all summers that have known
Beauty original in the skeleton,
And, where I gave myself, myself is given
Image on image, till I stand alone,
Mirrored and absolute in mirrored Heaven.

WORKHOUSE FUNERAL

THOMAS MOULT

Between two lines of planted privet trees
Out through the courtyard where the big house glooms
Along the rusty cinder-path, she comes
With her bright lips, and all her memories—
"*See, here's another workhouse funeral.*
Let's stop. Let's watch it pass. Stand by this wall."
"*Eh, what a tiny thing the coffin looks.*
More like a toy." "*No better than a box.*"
—and all her memories . . .
Of one who took a golden lover's ease
On the young breast so proud! . . . Unlifting now
As she comes slowly down the dusty brow
Between two lines of planted privet trees . . .
"*I guess it's just another old 'un gone.*"
"*Well, it's as well. Better than lingering on.*
I always think a pauper's lonelier
Alive than dead. So would it be with her."
—and all her memories . . .
Of one whose arms her body's grace would seize
(Ah, light that yielding grace, those tip-toeing feet!)
The love-beat of great worlds in her heart's beat,
On the bright lips the press of eternities——
"*She must have shrunk, growing old. I wonder where*
She comes from, what she was, why she was there?
Did anybody ever ask, or did they let
Her sit with folded hands and wait . . . and wait?"

—the press of eternities . . . And there it is,
The glooming house that holds the living dead.
How brief a while it knew her nodding head!
She leaves it, she and all her memories—
"Let's follow, shall we, to the grave?" *"No, no.*
"Poor thing. I'd like to. Can't be nice to go
Without a soul to see you put away
Except they're these, that's only here for pay."
—and all her memories . . .
She passes. Slow. And those who follow in her wake
See but a coffin the hired bearers take
Along the way that is a cemetery's . . .

Knowing it not, bearers or wardresses,
This burden of old death that yesterday
Doddered and whimpered in lone age's plight
Up yonder, where the big house mocks the light,
Once on her heart a golden lover lay,
On her bright lips the press of eternities . . .

THE CHINK

ROBERT GRAVES

A sunbeam on the well-waxed oak,
  In shape resembling not at all
The ragged chink by which it broke
  Into this darkened hall,
Swims round and golden over me,
  The sun's plenipotentiary.

So may my round love a chink find
  With such address to break
Into your grief-occluded mind
  As you shall not mistake
But, writhing, open to me for truth's sake.

THE RUT

P. D. CUMMINS

That which was not begun is ended,
The unclimbed stairway is descended;
The unread page where beauty lingered
With furtive haste is smeared and fingered;
The units scrawled without intention
Merge in the cipher's one dimension.
See, unmistakeable and certain,
Hate tears to shreds the fleshly curtain,
Leaving no single fold to screen us
From the vast emptiness between us.

BALLAD OF THREE RIVERS

FROM THE SPANISH OF
F. GARCIA LORCA
TRANSLATED BY
ROY CAMPBELL

Between the oranges and olives
The River Guadalquivir sweeps:
The two rivers of Granáda
From snow to corn descend the steeps.
(*Ah love*
That only came to tease!)

The River Guadalquivir
Has a long beard of garnets trailing;
The two rivers of Granáda
Are one, of blood, and one of wailing.
(*Ah love*
That vanished on the breeze!)

For the great sailing ships Sevílla
Keeps her highway flowing
But on the waters of Granáda
Only sighs are rowing.
(*Ah love*
That only came to tease!)

Guadalquivir, lofty tower
And breeze that waves the orange-fronds:
Dauro and Genil, little towers
Dead above the standing ponds.
(*Ah love*
That vanished on the breeze!)

Who says the water breeds, like marshfires,
Cries that shiver on the breeze?
(*Ah love*
That only came to tease!)

Carry the orange-blooms and olives,
Andalusía, to your seas.
(*Ah love*
That vanished with the breeze!)

FAIRFORD CHURCH

STELLA GIBBONS

In the wet light from the west
The beech hangs down her boughs
And one fairy tree moves her leafy breast
Beside God's valiant house,
One pale fairy tree of gold,
With not a leaf shed
Though the mists of the autumn are out
On this field of the dead.

Nobly the church looks up
At the yellow light,
Strong in five-hundred-year stone,
Facing day, watching night,
Strong in the sorrow around,
Braving the sky
And the terror of Time and the mindless cloud
Going wearily by.

Look, how it fights with its tower!
This shield of worn stone
With pallid blue glass and tall saints
On the field rich with bones!
Saying: "Little is sure. Life is hard,
We love, suffer, and die.
But the beauty of earth is real
And the Spirit is nigh."

COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

STANLEY SNAITH

They make a priory of their bed,
All deeds done, all words said;
And the falsehood withering on the tablet
Weaves double death for the dead.

With green growth overrun
The stones are slowly sinking down,
Memorials crumbling in the shadow
Of the heart's oblivion.

And when the dead shall say,
You have had your farthing hour of day,
Here is your unrejectable kingdom,
The stones will know the way.

THE SALMON

VERNON WATKINS

Salvation! O the salmon's head, the ages on a stone:
The laddered light is mounting there with angels to the Throne.
There the young and old agree, racing from the sea:
Too fast the light is flying for living eyes to see.

Inert upon the block of ice, a price is on his head;
Men pass where all the books of time are hanging by a thread.
Streams of light, eternal streams, where do they begin?
The spinners cast him out of time; they sunder what they spin.

Leaping from the Sibyl's pool and swimming through the sky,
All living things are pictures that cross his sage's eye.
A moment taken out of time, the flash in Elphin's weir,
The light all men are chasing is lost and living here.

The first he is of all the drops fallen from the sky,
The grain beneath the falling grains as ages fall and die;
The core of every stone he is, the nut of every tree,
The end and the beginning, the source of time is he.

Older than the oldest, yet younger than the young,
He sees the spinners cast him out: the ages are unstrung.
Scales of music's ice and fire, scales that Mozart made,
The certainties ascending, and caught before they fade.

Transfixed, he spells a parable: O, the pool of blood!
The whirlpool in the Baptist's eye Salome understood!
Jonah's glittering prophecies take counsel from a fin:
The music of the lost is there, the dead go out and in.

Cry out, though fifty fish-hooks were buried in his scales,
That light would pull an eagle down, and ride upstream to Wales,
Back to Caridwen's cauldron, where sprang the drops of sight
That lit on Taliesin's tongue, scalding drops and white.

Taliesin then knew all things. All ages then were hung,
Flashed in a vision by the drops that lit upon his tongue.
He knew all changes from their birth. By his art he freed
Souls from the swinish devils that mocked the Saviour's creed.

Another story runs that where the Knowledge-Tree took root
A sacred salmon in a pool that fed upon the fruit
Had swallowed everlasting life, and Paradise was shut
Till one would catch the sacred fish and feed upon the nut.

And there an old man crouched beside the margin of the pool
Waiting for the salmon-flash, immortal life to steal,
Till all his years had ebbed away, and left him only tears,
Because he slept, nor heard the splash that might renew his years,
The little splash he counted on, that might renew the years.

Before him when he woke stood Finn, who told him he had got
The leaping salmon while he slept, and cooked it in a pot.
Three drops had scorched his fingers; he sucked them, so he fed
By luck upon the Knowledge-Tree, rooted in the dead;
And this was Taliesin's tree, rooted in the dead.

To-night for the dark waters, where shivering radiance flies
With patterns on the hunted skin to match the moving skies:
No movement like this movement, that matches ice and flame;
The moment of its vanishing and coming is the same.

Salvation! O the salmon's head on that fishmonger's stone:
The light is married in that head to all the mind has known,
Transfigured by the living flash that runs along the bough,
The light of dawn, the almond-light that fills the ages now.

IN A FOREIGN HOSPITAL

BERNARD SPENCER

Valleys away in the August dark the thunder
roots and tramples: lightning sharply prints
for an instant trees, hills, chimneys on the night.
We lie here in our similar rooms with the white
furniture, with our bit of Death inside us
(nearer than that Death our whole life lies under);
the man in the next room with the low voice,
the brown skinned boy, the child among its toys
and I and others. Against my bedside light
a small green insect flings itself with a noise
tiny and regular, a 'tink; tink, tink'.

A Nun stands rustling by, saying good night,
hooded and starched and smiling with her kind
lifeless, religious eyes. "Is there anything
you want?"—"Sister, why yes, so many things:"
England is somewhere far enough to my right
and all Your letter promised; days behind
my left hand or my head (or a whole age)
are dearer names and easier beds than here.
But since tonight must lack for all of these
I am free to keep my watch with images,
a bare white room, the world, an insect's rage
and, if I am lucky, find some link, some link.

THE LEGACY

ALAN ROOK

Eyes are a legacy entailed
on future absence; can unite
England with Australia; the old
mountainous country near the heart
with my true way of loving you tonight.

When I in your eyes see myself
it is another self I see.
You too are there, the breath

of your true richness brightens me
and lightens my reflection,
so that I see two bright selves in one.

Would that this sense of distance might
find in your eyes solution,
and separate might compensate
with peace this separation.
Whilst we are two your eyes
hold one book I
can never open.

Turn then and sleep and know
the bare conclusion
stripped of all nakedness, a peace in space
in you, for there both good and union
of two goods are—
your good and my reflection
of you and me.

HOLIDAY VERSE—DIANO MARINA

BERNARD GUTTERIDGE

From the first twist of your body among
The warming, flutter-handed waves
At noon, when the sea goes even a darker blue
And the brown boy on a glass-bright raft craves
The light green coolness two fathoms down
Where the white stones for ever drown . . .

To the circle of chairs and your arm
Wine golden in the shade
That tents us from the sun our feet explore
Among the crumbling sand. Where pink begonia petals fade
And mock their watered root. Where your quick hand
Gives cool grains back into the cuddling sand.

From the hot brick-and-saffron peaches
And the cactus-bearing stone
To the naked, island-private body that slips
From shallow water to dry like cork on the rocks alone;
From the smiling person in the gay town
To the loving, touching, private frown . . .

THE RIVER BRIDGE

LAURENCE WHISTLER

Yes and yes and yes, I say.
I wish, I hope, I wait, I believe,
I am willing, I am patient, to obey, to receive
A flow, a flood, a drift and shift of mirrors;
For so—is life: grey into green into grey,
Loud into low, slow into fast, dark into day,
Each into something other moving, all that I know;
But I, no.
I silent alone,
Still in the midst of all, in the sup and sip,
In the lapse of the water, in the low laughter of stone:
Still as that shrine, the loveliest woman
To whom love crowds in a maze of mirrors,
Who to love says,
Yielding in the mute arch of her will,
Yes and yes and yes,
And, still, is still.

Receiving the sweet unrest into my cool O.

THE DESERT

(Words for Music)

PATRIC DICKINSON

The desert:
The desert is where you are,
It is the measure of your power to travel
Alone in reality.
The fool
Looks up to the carrion sky
And sees an enticing mirage—
The fountains, the avenues,
Of a cinderella city of pleasure:
But the sands will not melt to slippers of glass,
The desert is where you are,
Naked, unpitiful, yourself,
The desert is truth.

In the desert
Where the kite and vulture hover,
The make-believe in the sky
Deceives only
The foolish lover.
The wise have desert eyes and look
To the stoic compass of the stars,
Safe in themselves and alone,
Reliant on their own gift of living
In the shifting sand and the wind effacing
The desert where they are,
The falsehood and truth,
The life the death.

JOHN CLARE

"Here I lie, lone clock-a clay,
Waiting for the time of day."

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

This old man with the countenance of a prince,
Tenacious and demure
As any badger beaten and baited with dogs,
Has lain forgotten and rotting for twenty years,
Before they put him away in a casual grave.

They fade, the voices and the London faces,
Into the sadness of a broken ballad,
And Mary's voice under a green hawthorn.
For he has lost his way,
Leaning against the wind, his senses
Quickened with grief, into love's early-morning world.
The bee sings with a sharp tone, the flowers' eyes
In all their burning finery of dew
Are turned towards him, close and remorseless as children.
A country ghost wandering the backward lanes
He waits release into his final freedom.

ANKOR

JOHN BAYLISS

From this we came, to this we come at last—
Stone images at Ankor, gates of stone,
Stone temples where the heat and rain have burst
Thick pillars, and all human guards have gone.

The forest tendrils and the forest flowers
Rise up against the statues of the gods.
Stone lotuses lie broken. Broken stairs
Now echo only to the tread of birds.

The books have perished and the scribes are dead.
Cracked walls betray the empty treasuries:
The treasurer and his gold together fled,
Dark earth concealing both their destinies.

Demons and giants of the causewayside,
You sentinel grey bats you cannot see.
To bring you power some fifty heroes died,
And yet within you they lie powerlessly.

Naga the serpent, Brahma the divine,
Have given way to Shiva who destroys,
Yet even the great strength which built *his* shrine
Has shrivelled now into thin butterflies.

And a small lizard opens one bright eye
Where Yacovarman's priests would cross their hands,
While on the outer wall against the sky
A faceless lion blindly strikes the winds.

The statue of the Leper King looks out
Above the smiling statues of his Court,
No longer hearing the victorious shout,
Calm in his eternity of thought.

Four hundred shires and countless temples stood
In this great wilderness, nor could their gold
Be reckoned in the Chinese traveller's head.
Yet all was taken, king and slave were sold.

Sculptor and architect now have their wreath
The dusty equal of the dancing girl,
While Green Gods triumph at the Gate of Death
And rain rides down the winding elephant wall.

Remember this, proud cities and proud men,
Your crowded life shall fade before the years,
Leaving perhaps less proud a pile of stone
To mark the darkness of your vilest wars.

Then cry, with Mouhot, to your God for pity,
That he may spare his fire, delay your fall,
And hold disaster far outside your city
As long as may be. Yet the thickest wall

Must crumble underneath the thumbs of Time
And dumb and brutal Savagery go past:
From such a city, friend, our fathers came,
To such a fate it shall go down at last.

THE VISION

IAIN FLETCHER

Egypt, where Cleopatra strayed
Once—a brown delightful maid—,
Under her warm glance of stars,
Welcomes unwilling wanderers
With the ominous dull sand
Like a scurf upon the land.
Like cast limbs cold pillars flow
Upward in a flame-like row,
Bearing—not the masons' scars—
But an exuberant arch of stars.
Once the tambourines and drums
Heightened high viaticums;
While the hand, the mouth was kissed
With prayer and with eucharist
And the heart-shaped strings were loud
With a music grave and proud . . .

By the river's sweaty bank
Isis stands, among a rank
Of virgins in the slender choir
Of lutenists whose lutes suspire

Towards the mute key of the dead . . .
Further than this let none tread,
Lest the curse that never fades
Pursue from everlasting shades.
Let none break the coffin lid
Better let the ghost lie hid:
Lest its holy radiance
And its swanlike consonance
Make the votive music fail,
Appal the watchers that they pale.
And the rowers wavering chant,
Monotonously nonchalant,
Must alter in the instant when
Osiris vanishes from men;
We see the Single One avail,
Going up into the glory . . . alone:
Where hearts are weighed; where truth is known.
All their eyes are set
Upon the dead. Who can forget
Solemn millions in their miles
Of spices, along flaking aisles
Where metals sleep, where natron groins
The papyrus of skin . . . ?
The Gods are human-hearted, know
More than our own lovers do
The haunting absence of the flesh:
They know touch by the thin leash
That joins two penetrated hearts;
But only hold, not feel those darts.
Nor are they ever crowned
By any admirable wound.
Yet my foreign heart is sad
Seeing Isis wanly clad
And the strong tears on her face,
That give her form, that give her grace,
White composition of a space,
Are human tears, and this high woe
That sits upon her serious brow
Moves me more than ever shall
Cleopatra's moth-like musical
Mouth lamenting near the shrine
Of love: *O never now more mine*
O, Antony . . . now is the doom
Implicate in Actium.

POEM FOR D

ERIK DE MAUNY

Mistress of summer nights and starry kingdoms .
At whose touch earth engenders radiant fables
Thick as spring wheat, I think of you as a swan
A passing radiance of quick white wings
Across a darkening landscape, like a shaft
Of sun so tenderly chiding the storm it lights upon,
Or as star from the pit of anguish so more clear,
The unextinguished hope in the bitter year,
Simple as moonlit apples and as dense
With unshed mysteries. So burn bright
In bird or fable or star: still you transcend
These flickering categories in a greater light.

DIRGE ON PARTING

MAURICE CARPENTER

So I shall let her beauty ebb
From my heart's cave;
To another migrant
She grants haven.

I did not listen
To her secret beat.
It was my own want's whispers
Clouded my lips.

She branches in my veins
Like the hyacinth
But can no haven grant
Nor heart's anchor.

So I shall let her beauty ebb
From my heart's cave;
But the bright branches of the hyacinth
Still remain.

THE VALUE OF POETRY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Paradise Lost was published in Charles II's reign when the reading of serious poetry was not the fashion, and yet the thirteen hundred copies of the first edition were sold in two years. That points to a fine appreciative reading public existent in the background of the gay Restoration period. It has been thought that the publisher was mean in that he only gave Milton an advance of five pounds on this first edition. But that he should have been willing to print what must have seemed at first sight a forbidding and ponderous epic is also somewhat remarkable. It must be thought that Samuel Simmons was himself enthusiastic in his appreciation of the work, and was aware of the fact that there were sufficient discerning persons in England to justify his outlay in printing it. He had to sell to individual purchasers, because there was no mechanism of retail distribution and no circulating libraries as in our time.

It is probably true that a condition of having poetry is having an adequate number of people able to appreciate poetry. But they must care for it enough to be ready to buy it in published form. But that is stating the matter in the lowest terms. It is not the critics of verse who buy what is good, as it is not the professional taster of a vintage who lays it down. There must be enough who crave poetry, whose life is incomplete without it, for whose souls it is the manna which sustains them in the wilderness.

This truth can however be turned round. When you have enough people calling for poetry because their lives are sterile, harsh or uncomforted without it, you will find that true poets will be born and answer to the call. And the Samuel Simmons of our day will publish it.

We are a great people because we have a great poetry. There is no nation in the world that has produced so many outstanding poets, and every era of our existence has produced marvellous poetry. But this derives from the value that has been set upon poetry by successive generations. We have had men and women who had poetry in themselves, the key to whose lives and actions must be sought in the poetic side of their temperaments. We seek in literature a confirmation of what we feel about life and death, duty and love of the right, God and immortality. The poets say for us what we cannot quite say ourselves. "Here and here has England helped me" wrote Browning. "Here, and here the poets have helped me" England might reply.

One needs a little religion if it were only as a matter of salt. That is a vulgar way of saying that one must have poetry. Mortality is the morning of eternity and poetry keeps the early morning sky over our brows. The utterly prosaic person is an offence, like artificial flowers doing duty for a

garland, or a poor human pit-pony, a robot. Unfortunately our modern commercial civilisation and type of education and employment is bringing into existence an ever increasing progeny of the machine, people whose lives are expressed not by poems, not even by prose but by slogans and officialese.

Macaulay observed that poetry declined as civilisation advanced, and he has been criticised because this gloomy utterance was made just before the dawning of a golden age of poetry. But there was some truth in it. There was a danger, and now a hundred years later we are unpleasantly aware of it. State crime increases and a baleful paternalism arranges existence from the cradle to the grave. Almost all workers are put in blinkers so that their gaze shall not be to the right or left or to the sky above. Statesmen and officials of the most unpoetic utterance ever heard on God's earth seek to control the destinies of all. They often seem to act as if part of their creed was *Poetry is Not Good for You* and issue forms instead . . . God's creation becomes in their lingo "taxpayer", "wage-earner", "housewife", "production unit", "man power". This is the language of Materialism which steadily encroaches upon the territory of idealism, a fog of words which hide man from himself and man from man.

If one does not take a blankly pessimistic view it is because society is not all of one piece. Two worlds exist side by side and in one of them it is possible to rejoice. Factory sirens usurp the sky at dawn, but beyond the howl of the work-call the larks are singing. Industrial areas are a large smudge on the face of nature but still not a total eclipse. The repetitive motions of machinery have produced a substitute rhythm which disputes with the rhythm of ocean tide and bird's flight. Standardisation is applied to the human voice as if it were a sound-rendering of civil service handwriting. Men and women with these clear round voices do sometimes read a verse aloud to enforce a moral or emphasise some praiseworthy sentiment. Copybook phrases indicate their limits. But fortunately there are still millions of others with unspoiled voices and natural accents. Among these are the potential listeners to new poetry, and the poets of the coming time, the mute inglorious Miltons who could take voice if struck by magician's wand.

It is true there is an increasing number of people, who like morose dogs and cats are deaf to everything except the dinner bell and perhaps stone deaf to poetry. It needs a miracle to justify the statement that—*The deaf hear*. They are susceptible to miraculous treatment under the influence, for instance, of religion, love or wine. And when the deaf man begins to hear he steps from one world to another. The two worlds exist side by side and the problem is to enable individuals to step across.

Poetry is so valuable to the nation and to you and me in the nation, that one need not be ashamed of trying to teach people to see it, to hear it, to like it. Philistine Britain is the real mission field, darker than darkest

Africa, more Chinese than China. We have to baptise our heathen with Keats and leave them babbling that a thing of beauty is a joy forever.

Every convert adds at least one to the number of those who understand the language of poetry. That language in our case is true English. What is commonly spoken and written today is not true English, it is a jargon not very far removed from Yiddish. It is convenient and absolutely adequate for business. But poetry is almost as far removed from it as Latin. It is a golden gain to be able to discourse with a friend in the medium of poetry. And conversely, it is a tragic experience to be a very lonely poet. The lonely poets obtain consolation by chanting to the hills, by murmuring beloved verses as they walk through the woods, by their own musical incantations in ruins or forgotten places, in reciting by deserted lake shores when the moon is breaking through the night mists and the sword Excalibur flashes in her beams, but nevertheless to be so always alone is an unhappiness.

Poetry itself feels a heartache when it is neglected. Has one not detected the wistfulness which pervades a home from which the love of poetry has departed. On the shelves are the volumes of the poets which once the hand found without the use of eyes, and in a given volume there is the page which turns itself almost by its own volition, and words which meant so much to someone and a friend, even to a group of friends who were brought close to one another by poetry. Something dire has happened. The poets and the poet lovers have been withdrawn, a new generation which knows not poetry has taken possession, the books wait, dust settles on them, and there is that wistfulness. Turn down an empty glass!

There is a call from poetry to bring more readers, more listeners, more creators. It is not merely from the classics which like old oaks can survive centuries of neglect if necessary, but from new verse. The poets of our day and generation have to find their alter egos, for almost every poem is written either for or to someone, those unrhymed indiscretions of generous or indignant youth! The appreciation of new poetry used, within living memory, to be more certain than it is now. Numerous people had a hobby of making their own personal anthologies, scanning all new publications of verse and watching the poets' corners in the newspapers. It is a fascinating hobby and one that can be strongly recommended. Instead of collecting stamps or coins or pottery, collect poems!

By reading from one's own collection, new poets may be discovered. That is one of the rewards of looking for poetry. American amateurs of literature go a step further and have gramophone records made of poems said by the poets themselves. They record on discs the whole proceedings of a literary evening. That puts poetry on a cultural level with music. In truth it is more valuable than music; but as yet music is for the many and poetry is for the few, a disparity which has to be remedied if we are to survive.

W. E. HENLEY: TWENTY-FIVE NEW POEMS

A CENTENARY DISCOVERY

EDITED BY

W. M. PARKER

In view of the birth centenary of William Ernest Henley, the poet and critic, there is, perhaps, a special interest in the discovery I have made of a group of hitherto unpublished Henley poems among the Blackwood Papers in the National Library of Scotland.

While he was recovering from an amputation of his foot by Lister in the Edinburgh Infirmary in 1873, Henley composed his well-known verses, *In Hospital*. After being a patient for twenty months he was removed to Portobello on the Firth of Forth, and from there he wrote to Blackwood on 6th September, 1875, submitting to him a MS. of poems for *Blackwood's Magazine,* and adding that if the MS. should be accepted "I would do my best to alter any expressions in it that may not seem to you becoming". He returned to Edinburgh, where he remained for a few months to work on the staff of *The Encyclopædia Britannica,* and on 4th October, 1877, he again wrote to Blackwood: "Looking thro' my papers, I came across the MS. of a cycle of songs. They do not seem to me utterly bad. In fact I have decided to send them to you, in the hope that you may find them worthy of Maga. The pencil marks are due to the pencils of friends and not of editors".

For permission to bring these letters and the following new poems to light I am indebted to Henley's representative, Mr. N. W. Henley, and to Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons. The poems, which did not appear in *Blackwood's,* may have been written during Henley's convalescence in hospital, or immediately after he came out. Some of them were revised and included in *Bric-à-Brac, Echoes,* and *Hawthorn and Lavender.* But those here given are entirely new, and are extracted from two groups of MSS., the first being entitled *A Sea Side Fantasy.* The first unpublished poem runs:

(1)

Under a shifting ashen sky,
Beside a sullen ashen sea,
I watched the windy morning glooming;
For she I knew would pass me by,
The bright fair girl whose thought is blooming
Like the white wealth of May in me.

I saw the pageant of the sky,
I heard the soughing of the sea,
I felt that she was coming. Slowly
She came; and as she passed me by,
Composed and virginal and holy,
She turned, and flushing looked on me.

The burden of the stormful sky
Lay gray and heavy on the sea,
But sunshine in my heart was springing.
For love who long had passed me by,
While she receded, neared me, singing
As he might yet be one with me.

On the margin of the next poem a pencil note "rough line" refers to the second line of the first verse.

(2)

When I behold her, on the quiet sands,
Or where shrill surges thro' the shingles hiss,
My reverent eyes embrace her where she stands,
And on the grace of her unconscious hands
My spirit lays an immaterial kiss.

To me her memory like a perfume cleaves,
The perfume of a dear, dew-dabbled rose:
A rose yet ignorant in its tender leaves
Of the gray wind that shakes and frets and grieves
The innocent flowers, when summer sighs and goes.

Another pencil remark appears on the margin of the next poem: "last verse so-so, very".

(3)

The wings of song shall bear us forth.
Your proper home with love and me,
Unconscious of a bitter North,
Laughs lovely from the southern sea.

The isle all year is summer sweet.
In every wind is wandering balm.
Out of rich flowers fair and fleet
The plantain spreads and soars the palm.

By day the lift profound and still
Is hushed and vast with heart and light.
Strange stars superb and silent wheel
Round the great moon that rides the night.

O sleepy thunder of the surf
Upon the reef that bars the bay!
O coral caves! O glowing turf!—
We twain may kiss the world away.

We twain may kiss away the world,
The far sad world that wakes and strives.
For us its flaunted flags are furled.
We hold a dream that fills our lives.

There is a more pronounced lyrical mood in the poem which follows, but the critic with the pencil took exception to "reproof reply" in the fifth line of the second verse.

(4)

A moment ago she stood where I stand—
Shed, O Sun, thy splendour thereon!
Here is the print of her foot on the sand—
Sea, stay at ebb till its grace be gone.
I may not follow her whither she walks—
Blow me a perfume, Wind, from my dear!
Nor talk with her even as a stranger talks;
For love unknown is made mute with fear.

Were I to speak, she might answer not.
Shine, O Sun, on her maiden grace!
But if I am dumb she will never wot.
Breathe, O Sea, on her blushful face.
I will speak to her then tho' reproof reply—
Sing to her, Wind, as a spirit sings!
And get me a hope ere my chance go by;
For love must perish, or dare all things.

There is much technical ingenuity in these early verse productions, and Henley has captured an attractive terseness in

(5)

To morrow I will seek and dare.
I hear the steady sea!
The rain has passed, the skies are bare,
Keen stars make silver of the air,
And there is hope in me.

To morrow I will know aright.
The wind is fresh and bold!
The lighthouse lamp is calm and bright
And on my shoulders Time is light
And Fate has lips of gold.

The use of refrain in each second and third line of the following three verses is as telling as the almost Swinburnian rhythm of the whole.

(6)

The light from my life seems fled—
O the monotonous rain
Pattering in on the pane!
And my heart is heavy as lead
For the word that I left unsaid—
It pours and flutters and falls,
And lisps and rustles and calls,
And it says that my chance has fled.

The sun has got him a shroud—
O the unwearying rain,
Splashing the resonant pane!
The sky is loaded with cloud,
The wrath of the wind is loud—
Over the desolate ships
It streams and draggles and drips!
And the shuddering waters are cowed.

The sands are lonely and wet—
O the despair of the rain,
Lashing and blurring the pane!
I fear that my star hath set.
I am nigh too sad to regret.
Over the sodden gray town
It drizzles drearily down,
And I would that I might forget!

Mr. B. Ifor Evans has remarked how Henley derived from Heine. "This", he commented, "frequently results in a fresh and vigorous movement in his lyrical stanzas", and such freshness and vigour are apparent in:

(7)

The wind in its hautboy of iron is blowing amain;
The arch of the sky saggs heavy with imminent rain;
And high round the spiritless sea, at its ultimate rim,
The storm thro' its orbit glooms on, portentous and grim;
And I know that I never shall see my dear one again.

Between the sullen gray cliffs and the dark brown rocks I stand
Alone on the long wet reaches of desolate sand
And think:—"Was it here, in this place, that I looked on her first,
When she walked between sweeping cloud-shadow and sudden sun-burst,
And the dream I have tended too well first stooped to my hand?"

Tho' this be the spot, as it was no more it shall be.
A something has gone from the spell of the sun and the sea.
She has passed, and I know not whither. Filled full of the rain,
Wind worried and weary, an ache with unspeakable pain,
I feel that the wet gray weather is imaged in me.

The first group ends with this poem, which expresses the lover's despair:

(8)

The sea was loud and splendid,
The wind was clear and keen.
I watched them romp together,
And thought of what had been.

The tide was flowing joyous;
It sparkled in the sun.
The foam clots flew asunder;
I knew that all was done.

And where the surge was nearest
I wrote upon the shore,
Half sorrowing and half scornful—
Farewell for evermore.

The second group of poems is entitled *A Commonplace Fantasy: Song-Cycle.* Here, on the whole, the lyrical moods have a blither tone.

(9)

O the loves that fawn and fret,
Soar for joy and stoop for sorrow,
Agonize, forego, forget
And expire without a morrow!

Not in vain they court the sun.
Every hour of tears or laughter
Is a space of being won
On the blank of Life's Hereafter.

The next poem opens with the same words as the published verses, "If I were king my pipe should be premier", in *Bric-à-Brac:*

(10)

If I were king, it seems to me
My realm would lead an easy life,
Without the drum accept the fife,
And love the land and use the sea.

To each, in perpetuity,
A little amicable strife,
A jug of wine, a handsome wife,
Would from the state allotted be.

Myself would ask, as regal pay,
To honour with my lips by night
And worship with mine eyes by day,
Superbly long and soft and bright,
A dry cascade of bodied light,
June girl's gold head that smelled of May.

A touch of humour creeps into the last line of

(11)

You fell asleep before the fire;
The lights and shadows found you fair;
They palpitated round your breast,
And hid and sought among your hair.

I sat and watched—but, bending down,
A little swarm of drowsy loves
Seemed fluttering round about your lips—
You owe me still that pair of gloves!

In the next poem the lover laments his inability to give his beloved all he would like to bestow on her for her birthday.

(12)

I cannot send you gifts to-day,
The blessed day that saw you born.
It is not mine, sweet Rose-of-May,
To gather grapes, or garner corn.

My mouth has yearned upon you long,
But other lips must kiss you, Dear.
A tender thought, a snatch of song,
Is all I lay before you here.

A thought that seeks you out of tears,
As mounts the shepherd toward the star.
A song that unto all new years
Perhaps will tell how fair you are.

I kneel below, you throne above.
Oh, stoop awhile, and take of me
My dream that seems a mouth of love,
My threat of immortality.

Then comes the sensuousness of

(13)

I never view your shining hair
Without an impulse in my hand,
Without a longing to command
With tears and kisses there.

I ache to feel it, soft and cool
And smelling sweet about mine eyes:
As over Winter, where he lies,
The Spring spreads bountiful.

The view described in the next set of verses seems to be that from the high, north part of Edinburgh, looking across the Firth of Forth to the Fife coast.

(14)

The Month is May, the sun is high,
The wind is joyous, and, unstayed,
It fills with driving cloud the sky,
And mocks the land with scudding shade.

Like waves upon a stiffened sea
The roofs go rolling down the steep,
Where stack and spire surge airily
Like masts above a monstrous deep.

I look away toward the north:
The twinkling glasses flash and gleam,
And blue beyond the blue-grey Forth
The hills gloom vague, as in a dream.

And with your thought they mix and strive—
How good it is to be alive!

The ecstasy of joy in Maytime continues in further verses:

(15)

Blackbirds are bugling, wild with mirth and May.
The blue sky deepens, glowing, brooding, beaming.
A great, green reverie absorbs the day,
The swift night tires with dreaming.

The fields are full of languor. Copse and croft
Have secrets and sweet memories haloed between them.
The very winds, now strenuous and now soft,
Have something sensual in them.

O symphony of full-veined life and lust!
Brutal, ineffable, O delight of being!
My soul is drunken with its own mad must,
Mine eyes are blind with seeing.

A fine vigour animates

(16)

The blue sky blenches toward the rim.
The black sea reels with waves that roam,
And, shot with light, from brim to brim
Rolls twinkling round with flitting foam.

Like beautiful and sentient things
The breakers leap toward the land,
And, roaring to the wind that sings,
Dash out their lives along the sand.

The great glad sun, the sounding sea,
The joyous wind, are mixed and blent
In one enormous harmony,
The cry of a supreme content—

And as they rush and shine and roll,
The music reaches thro' my soul.

Seascape, lyrically treated, is further exemplified in

(17)

A thin, clear glaze of silvery green
Spread from the set sun, fain and fond,
And Hesper's promise flashed between
Its glamour and the blue Beyond.

The still sea, darkling down the west,
From point to point its rhythms drew.
A sense was shed of nearing rest.
I sat alone, and dreamed of you.

The sea-pieces are interrupted by a theme that is akin to the Ballade "Of Life and Fate" in *Bric-à-Brac*.

(18)

Time and Chance, Time and Chance have met.
We are crushed between them.
Life and love desert us past regret,
Us that sought to win them.

Fare thee well, fare thee well, my love.
Breaking off endeavour,
I descend, and thou remain'st above,
Lost to me for ever.

The next poem of five verses was later revised and shortened to three verses, appearing as No. XVII of "Echoes", beginning "The sands are alive with sunshine". In the last line of this version the word "deep" was substituted for "high".

(19)

The clouds and the beams and billows
In beautiful dance take hands.
In sleepy, unequal measures
The breakers pace the sands.

The beach is alive with people;
They lounge and loiter along,
And out in the bay a bugle
Is lilting a gallant song.

The bathers plash and wanton,
The dogs are eager and fleet,
And children wade the surges
With cool, white legs and feet.

The sound of cheerful voices
Takes wings of the airs that pass,
And down on the distant shingle
There flashes a shard of glass.

O the brutal content of all things,
The insolent ecstasy!
The Firth as with laughter dimples—
I would it were deep over me.

Henley now introduces a defiant note which presages the mood of the famous "Out of the night that covers me".

(20)

While the miser wakes to grasp,
And the sinner stirs to weep,
And the lover longs to clasp,
Make me one with Sleep.

Be my brows with poppies dark;
Let the mad world reap the corn.
I will sleep, and dream the lark
Flecks the rose of morn.

I will sleep, and mock the world,
Out of care for sound and sun,
Till the flag of life be furled,
And the fight be done.

And now comes an unrhymed poem. Saintsbury has pointed out that "from almost the first Henley liked rhymelessness". This is an interesting early example of Henley's usage.

(21)

A thin, grey fog slides shivering from the west,
Absorbing sand and shoal and dull, dun sea.
The tide, the sad, slow tide,
Swirls low, and sudden loud, along the shore.

My desolate thought is one with seas and sands
Hid comfortless in melancholy mist.
O sad and slow, the tide—
Her memories break and sound along my soul.

This is followed by

(22)

I had a dream of love and you;
The wan old world was full of sun,
The streams were strong, the skies were blue,
And you and I were wed and one.

My thought was earnest in your eyes;
We walked together hand in hand;
And Death was but a dream that lies,
And Life a fair and fruitful land.

I watched you at your mother's task;
I laughed to see you bend and brood;
I wakened on an empty flask,
A broken pipe, and solitude.

The sense of gratitude finds a very personal expression in the following three verses:

(23)

You gave me meat, you brought me wine,
You got me rest and raiment:
You bade revive this corse of mine,
The task your only payment.

You set me far from smoke and strife,
And of the sea, my neighbour,
Obtained me yet a glimpse of life
And yet a chance of labour.

I pray whatever gods there be
To bless you as I bless you.
I thank them it is mine to see
And, if in thought, possess you.

The penultimate poem is such an attractive little lyric that it is surprising Henley did not include it in one or another of his published collections.

(24)

The eyes of my beloved
Are deep and clear and grey.
Her shed hair makes a golden gloom;
Her skin is white as apple bloom;
She is more sweet than May.

Her love is like the starlight.
Holy and hushed and vast—
But its divine serenity
Will never deepen over me;
Her very hope has passed.

Finally, in his concluding poem Henley enters into a mood of self-depreciation thus:

(25)

But know me for a Might-Have-Been,
A fruit that fell yet crude and green,
A star that shot one summer night,
A song that never won to light.

The Fairy Prince will come some day,
And lead you forth and far away,
And realize the shining dream
That was to me a wandering gleam.

You will recall me, not forget—
Perhaps recall me with regret,
And feel the pleasure, faint and fain,
That lives in voluntary pain.

Preserve the song, retain the sigh;
They will revoke the days gone by,
When Life was young and Time was fair,
The days that laugh, and vanish—where?

RIMBAUD—AND TWO HOMELY MUSES

Four Poems by Rimbaud by Ben. Belitt (Sylvan Press, 7s. 6d.)
Rimbaud's Le Bateau Ivre done into English Rime and Latin Hexameters by E. H. W. Meyerstein (E. H. W. Meyerstein, 3 Gray's Inn Place. 2s. 6d.)

Reviewed by

ROY CAMPBELL

"All right, my Friend," said the Argentino to his mule, who, while plunging and wallowing during the crossing of a difficult stream, had accidentally got one of his hind hoofs stuck into one of the stirrups, "All right, my Friend, if you are going to jump on, I think it's about time I jumped off," which he promptly did, though it was in mid-stream and he was fully clothed in his Sunday-best. That is what the ghost of Arthur Rimbaud must be saying to Mr. Meyerstein.

As for what he might have said to Mr. Ben Belitt, it would have been perfectly unprintable but for the unfortunate fact that Mr. Ben Belitt was nowhere within earshot and wherever the hoofs may have got stuck it certainly wasn't in the stirrups of Arthur Rimbaud. Mr. Belitt prefaces

his attempt at translation with some excellent apologetics for the system he intended to use; they contain some invaluable advice for all would-be translators. The only trouble is that unlike Mrs. Beeton who always prefaces her recipes with the admirable advice "First of all secure your hare, your trout, your salmon, or your deer," Mr. Ben Belitt has left both his fishing rod and his shot-gun at home. His ideas for cooking-up and serving Rimbaud would be excellent—if he had only remembered that a certain smattering of French would come in handy in translating French Poetry and that even in these days a knowledge of ordinary English vernacular is not to be sniffed at if you are going to translate into English. For a man who is both blind and deaf the last sort of birthday presents to buy should be a telescope and a Jew's harp such as Mr. Belitt seems to have bought for himself. In trying to produce a hybrid between a translation and a straightforward crib he produces a lifeless abortion. His French is so pidgin that if I may give the English equivalent he would call a sailor a "crew" or vice versa, as in the line "I was unmindful of all the crew".

Of all poems in foreign languages the "Bateau Ivre", which seems to have been conceived in the idiom of English thought, though it was written in French, not only automatically transcribes itself into English verse but forcibly finds the correct rhymes and metres as it goes along. As long as one keeps to the general sense, the translation looks after itself. Take the first three verses:—

> "I felt no more the guidance of the tow-men
> As I came down by listless river-coasts:
> To serve for targets whooping Redskin bowmen
> Had pinned them naked to their coloured posts.
> Bearer of Flemish corn or English cotton,
> I cared no more for crews of any kind:
> When with my own the scuffle was forgotten,
> The rivers let me rove where I inclined.
> Into the furious chopping of the tides,
> Last winter, deaf as a child's brain, I glided,
> Nor have the unmoored headlands on their sides
> Sustained so proud a buffeting as I did . . ."

And so on at a canter right to the very end, without a single ditch!

Now listen to Mr. Meyerstein:—

> "As I descended the impassive streams,
> No more of towing guides was I aware;
> Taken as targets, hailed with tribal screams,

Redskins to painted posts had nailed them, bare.
I was indifferent to any crew;
Dutch wheat or English cotton was my freight.
When with my towers done was this to-do,
The streams let me descend; I chose my fate.
In the mad chopping of the tide's discord
Last winter, deafer than the brains of children,
I ran, and the peninsulas unmoored
Have stood no hubbub-triumph more bewild'ring . . ."

From then on the hubbub-triumph begins to hubble-bubble more and more bewilderingly until we come to:

(I) "have followed for whole months, like cow-crammed dairies
Hysterical, the wave's assault of reefs,
Not dreaming that the bright feet of the Maries
Had strength to muzzle Ocean's wheezy sniffs . . ."

Here is a case where the literal sense could be side-stepped in order to keep in with the spirit of the poem. The "vacheries" referred to are out of door *manades* such as exist round the Holy Maries to this day—not the cowsheds of the North. The word "poussifs" was not used by Rimbaud in its veterinary asthmatic sense but to mean broken-winded, snorting, and gasping from over-exertion. Here goes for a running shot!

"Like mad stampeding cattle on the prairies,
With breakers I have charged the reefs and screes
For months: not dreaming the lit feet of Maries
Could force a snaffle on such snorting seas . . . "

The translations of Cameron, Currey, and even Rickword (the most inaccurate of the lot) are far better than Mr. Meyerstein's or Mr. Belitt's since they avoid the ludicrousness of Mr. Meyerstein and the plain dullness of Mr. Belitt. Mr. Meyerstein has also a Latin translation of the "Bateau Ivre" to follow. It looks far better than his English. It would be hard to be worse. Translations (like wives) are seldom strictly faithful if they are in the least attractive. Urquhart and Fitzgerald are notorious for their infidelity. Both Mr. Meyerstein's and Mr. Belitt's Muses are homely in the extreme. Only Mr. Meyerstein's is faithful. But she is so true to the letter as to estrange the whole spirit of the original. She is not dull like Mr. Belitt's Muse; she is frankly hideous. She is so grimly and fantastically faithful that she drives her husband (the original) out of doors in search of fun elsewhere. By the very grimness of her fidelity she causes an abysmal estrangement and divorce of the spirit such as no amount of infidelity or adultery could have done: and decorates the forehead of the original with such a weirdly fungoid kind of vegetation as would make a whole jungle of cuckolds' antlers look like a bunch of azaleas!

POETRY IN AUSTRALASIA

2. HUGH McCRAE (b. 1876)

PHILIP LINDSAY

His Scottish descent is the only link between Hugh McCrae and Adam Lindsay Gordon: in all else are they different, except in love for the ballad. But while Gordon derived from Scott, McCrae leaped the interpreters and went to the source, preferring the anonymous medieval and renascance poets to the debased interpretations of Scott and Aytoun. In his work, however, the ballad takes comparatively small space, and it is of importance mainly because from it he learned the strength of simplicity:

> The hawk entowered in the sky,
> The lonely lord of heaven,
> At daybreak saw him solitary;
> And yet again at even.

In the new southern land the troubadour had arrived, using troubadour themes on occasions, unconsciously re-living in one man the development of European poetry. Probably this was necessary, this return to the medieval ballad, for the seed to be planted afresh—McCrae being the first important Australian poet—but to the themes and rhythms of the old world he brought a new vision, an uprush of vitality and joy that made them personal and fresh and Australian. Essentially a lyric poet, his essays into narrative and drama, although splendid so far as they went, abruptly dried almost in mid-thrust, leaving only fragments poised often on the moment of drama: *Achilles before Agamemnon; Joan of Arc* with its simple yet haunting finale "Get thee to Chinon saith the Lord"; *Orleans and Isabelle* ending with "My dark-mouthed Isabelle . . . *all mine!*" . . . To complain of this cutting short would be as absurd as to complain that Coleridge never finished *Kubla Khan*; works with such depths of imagery cannot be sustained, either by poet or reader, and McCrae after these occasional bursts of narrative left them all unfinished, returning to his true world of the lyric and the ballad.

His lyrics, however, were rarely content to contain one thought, one cry of delight or despair, but were like those of the seventeenth century, packed with emotion, revealing a world made magical through the poet's eye. Even to fantasy he brought this fire of reality, this gusto, keeping his dream-women strongly on their feet, goddesses human enough to be embraced, as in this charming vision of *The Yellow Lady:*

A thousand years ago, or two,
I dwelt, (or dreamt I did) in sin
With one, a yellow lady, who
Was heiress to a Mandarin.
Cheefoo! Cheefoo! Sharp-toothed Cheefoo!
If only you might bruise my chin
As once, Cheefoo, you used to do
On nights of sin, on nights of sin—
To wound was but to woo with you
A thousand years ago, or two.

And when the moon grew round and bright
Like a coiled dragon, I would put
Into my breast for sheer delight
Your tiny rose-leaf Chinese foot
While you would sing *Ming's Song* and write
With long pink nails upon my skin
The tender hymn that wailed the flight
Of nights of sin . . . *our* nights of sin.
Ah Golden One! Sharp-toothed Cheefoo!
A thousand years ago . . . or two.

To the 'Ninetyish fascination with empty words like "sin", McCrae brought reality, showing us that behind such words lay cruelty and subtle delights, making his lady *live* with her tiny rose-leaf foot and her long pink nails writing in blood her hymns to the Chinese Venus. The 'Nineties were the influence of his youth, and naturally he could not escape the flavour of his period, but he transmuted this flavour, lifting it from vagueness into light. To love he brought more than that adolescent age's wonder, he brought also the maturity of passion. Women to him remained as mysterious as ever they were to Dowson, but he went beyond Dowson because, not content with dreams and worship before the mystery, he sought to find it, like a true poet, in:

This strange, sweet, hidden chamber of my dreams:

There, the impulsive bed unfolds its treasury
Of flesh, claspt naked, in a web of pearls.
The very ashes on the breathless grate,
Stirred with her beauty, multiply their eyes,
Grow red with longing, till, insatiate,
Their glut o'ercomes them, and their gaze turns blind:
Musk and warm odours! Like the floating bloom

Aerial flowers shed invisible
Around the body of the splendid girl
Jove comes to ravish . . . Throw wide the window.
Let the smoke go loose. The powdered candles
Of the pine without will light the kisses
Of love's interchange.

'Tis half the pleasure
Counted o'er again, to sift the darkness
Where a woman's near; to touch by fortune
On a hill of love, to feel the passage
Of her living breath make the veins warmer
And the heart gain pace. To find a curled lip
Underneath the throat catch and hang sucking
Till the secret house of Eros opens
All its little doors; and on that instant,
To possess your soul and dare the godlings
Take it back from you!

From this heady physical ecstasy he could turn to cry with despairing delight before the mystery of desire in *Pantera:*

Pantera dear, between us two,
How much is dream . . . how little true?
Is one a phantom . . . I, or you?

Behold, like seed of Chronos' shell,
This hour, down-falling from the bell,
Repeats its iron lie through Hell . . .

Of love's own treasure lightly spilled,
Ghosts of desires unfulfilled,
Laked with fire and fiery hilled.

Pantera . . . speak . . . thy daemon bids . . .
Out of the great-stoned pyramids;
With sleepy surmeh smeared the lids

Veiling thine eyes, in jewell'd nets,
Droppt from thy brow, what rose regrets
Sweet hanging-gardened parapets?

Only thy mouth . . . no fig within
So red . . . the darling songs begin
Of our most secret hidden sin.

Odour of Venus-comb, and flowers
Helmèd with gold . . . the crying showers
Wail to regain their dwindled towers.

Smooth flows the flame from cloud to cloud,
Now goes the threatful thunder-brow'd
Thor to his cannon! . . . O, most proud

Pantera . . . Queen . . . envious shade
Bloodily feeding, nothing allay'd,
Full from my heart love's debt is paid.

Pompilius! All golden wine
That clear outspringing voice of thine!
Pantera's lips of almandine

Ache for thy kisses; she will float
Beyond the moon, if yet her throat
Taste they warm beard or brindled coat,

Like a young lion's fast impresst
Across her short Egyptian breast . . .
O, she is honey-mouthed, and dresst

For the encounter: mad the hours
When she must give in Cupid's bowers,
Her nipples for thy finger-flowers.

Pantera dear, between us two,
How much is dream . . . how little true?
Is one a phantom . . . I, or you?

In these two poems are contained the spirit of McCrae, this worship of woman as both mystery and woman, but it would be untrue to suggest that he wrote of nothing but love. Proudly he might proclaim:

Behold! I am love's prisoner . . .
Yet I would not go free
Though all the Queens of Nineveh
Bared golden breasts for me . . .

yet he found delight, too, in the simple bounty of an earth in which there were good fellows as well as gay girls, in which one could laugh and suffer, and where nature also held its mystery:

Clean running wave and sunward-soaring flower,
The great hot sky, the colours of the wood
Troubled with shadow, and the sudden shower
Of heavenly fire across the solitude—

but always, to find him at his greatest power, one must turn to McCrae as the poet of love. His first published book was called *Satyrs in Sunlight* and emphasis should be laid on *sunlight*. Often his images might have been the stock-images from the poet's Lemprière but on the anvil of his mind they were hammered to new shapes and his satyrs danced in the Australian bush and not in the pastel shaded woods of Greece. His centaurs fought not only other centaurs but stallions to possess their mares and found themselves in terrible battle when

A roar of hoofs, a lightning view of eyes
Redder than fire, of long, straight, whistling manes,
Stiff crests, and tails drawn out against the skies,
Of angry nostrils webbed with leaping veins.
The stallions come! . . .

To Australia, McCrae brought far more than European imagery; he brought for future poets subtle rhythms while he gave them the courage to realise that all poetry was their heritage. From the tradition of writing imitative ballads and feeble Keats, he broke with the violence of joy, defiantly crying:

I blow my pipes, the glad birds sing.
The fat young nymphs about me spring,
I am the lord,
I am the lord,
I am the lord of everything.

And, indeed, McCrae was, and is, the lord of Australian poetry, the forger of the future swords of song. To appreciate his achievement, he must be seen on the dull background against which he struggled and conquered, a lone voice of poetry in a songless land with none —or rather, very few—to listen, for years without followers or little understanding of his greatness, and considered almost in the light of a renegade because he rejected the stockmen and swagmen and bullockies in which tradition was already strong and to which so many Australians clung under the false idea that by using images so patently their own they could express the nation's individuality. But individuality is an attitude of mind, images are universal to be used by all capable of using them, and an English poet, should he wish to do so, has as much right as an Australian

to use the bush as an Australian has to use the English background. In the world of the spirit there are no frontiers, Homer and Shakespeare speak as brothers, and when McCrae, in revulsion against the poetasters of his time, found inspiration in Chaucer and the English ballad-writers, far from being a traitor, he was a benefactor to his country by introducing the ancient seeds of English poetry to flourish there.

It is the spirit fashioning the material that matters, and in spirit, in his gusto, his strong love of laughter and women, and his sardonic contempt for all values save his own, McCrae is as Australian as Lawson or Banjo Paterson, but he did mightier, subtler things than either of these and became the true father of Australian poetry today.

To write of a poet to an audience probably ignorant of his work is difficult because one feels the necessity to quote and to keep on quoting to substantiate every claim, and to give McCrae's full range would need a whole number of this journal. But what I have here given will, I hope, show the reader something of his quality and suggest the effect his work naturally made on a comparatively songless land.

Imagine an England practically empty of poetry, then imagine the effect of suddenly reading such vital work as this and you will appreciate what McCrae has meant and still means to my country. From songs of bushrangers and the outback, away from the sickly lilies of despair, he sang in sunlight to the ancient, the undying gods, and to his influence may probably be placed the fact that pure poetry remains an ideal in Australia. He opened the world of the spirit, stressing the deathless truths of beauty, laughter and love, and I am pleased and proud to say that no poet there has allowed politics, that deathly polyp on so much poetry today, to strangle wonder and ecstasy before a world in which politicians are merely a corroding shadow to be fenced outside with their distracting and soul-destroying panaceas for an empty belly or a naked back. The spirit, the soul, the heart, to which all poets since time began have sung remains the inspiration and the audience of that world which is the Antipodes of Europe where too often the bluebook usurps Apollo's hymnal and bread takes the place of the soul's manna or where those who seek to avoid the depressing reality about them tiptoe off into the metaphysics of despair, closing their hearts on life.

Being a new continent, Australia is also a new world for the spirit, and with McCrae, first of the *conquistadores*, the young men there, contemptuous of mirages of Utopia or of flights into religion, go seeking their Grail of song with courage like their predecessors in the age of Shakespeare. After McCrae, or, rather, through McCrae, was born this renascence, but the debt to McCrae must not be forgotten nor will it be forgotten when full accounting is taken of his followers although, technically, that debt might not be plain, being largely one of the spirit; and that is something which can never be weighed.

TRADITION AND CHANGE

Selected Poems by Dorothy Wellesley, Duchess of Wellington (Williams & Norgate, 10s. 6d.); *Collected Poems*, 1929-1936 (New Edtn.), by C. Day Lewis (Hogarth Press, 10s. 6d.); *Poems of the Forces* The Fortune Forces Anthology, (Fortune Press, 8s. 6d.); *Until Bengal* by Harry Milner. Introd. by John Gawsworth (Gupta, Calcutta, 3s.); *Pulp in Bosnia* by Robert Kilian Brady (Fortune Press, 6s.); *Graves and Resurrections* by Vernon Scannell (Fortune Press, 6s.); *Poems* by Eric Clough Taylor. Introd. by Ronald Fraser (Christopher Johnson, 6s.); *Three Sonatas* by E. H. W. Meyerstein (The Author, 3 Gray's Inn Place, 3s.); *Gloucestershire* by Kenneth Hare (The County Books: Robt. Hale, 15s.).

Reviewed by

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

In an Introduction to a selection from her poems made by him in 1936, W. B. Yeats tells how he came upon poems signed Dorothy Wellesley in an anthology and how his eyes filled with tears of excitement and delight. That Introduction is reprinted in this fuller selection which the Duchess of Wellington has herself made and it remains a valuable appreciation of which any poet might be proud. In a phrase Yeats fixes the outstanding characteristic of her work, "she can unite a modern subject and vocabulary with traditional richness", and it is that dexterity in language which has always attracted me in Dorothy Wellesley's work. The eye remarks, the mind dwells on its picture and conjures up word and thought associations, and the poem is composed with a deliberate lovingness of detail and music which is all too rare in modern verse. I think of Marlowe when I read:

> . . . the King of Lydia in a tomb
> Half a league long sits with his paramour
> And players in a ring: the wine and flour
> Turned into sediment, the copper comb
> To verdigris, her porphyry spool
> Beside his shirt of wool.

And when she writes of a dappled doe waking at dawn I hear the authentic note of Marvell and all true English lyrists:

> When I give birth to death again,
> Or death to birth for ever,
> I'll rest, remembering opal rain
> That woke the doe in cover;
> And see again her coat inlaid

With gold and silver glance the glade
With lights that ripple over;
And see her swim with spirit eyes
To lilies of her Paradise.

There is, too, something Blakean in the purity of that moment of vision; but for the most part Dorothy Wellesley is a conscious artist, taking everyday themes of nature and landscape, art and travel (including a visit to Lenin's tomb), and recording her impressions always with complete clarity and nearly always with distinction.

A wide range of thought and technical accomplishment is apparent in the new edition of the first volume of Mr. Day Lewis's *Collected Poems, 1929-1936,* to which he has added what he thinks worth preserving from "A Time to Dance" and "Noah and the Waters." It is a volume indispensable to any study of the verse tendencies of the past two decades, for here in very truth the waters meet: the strong stream of traditional verse is seen boiling into the pool of experiment, while (to complete the metaphor) the young successors to the once formidable triumvirate, "Auden, Spender and Day Lewis", may be imagined standing around and fishing for indications. And what are those indications? In the main surely, that Mr. Day Lewis in the 'thirties went as far as he would wish to go (confirmed by his recent work) in the direction of metrical and prosodical experiment; and then, that his sources lie in the everlasting hills of the English poetic mind. True, he is:

no English lawn
To build a smooth tradition
Out of Time's recession

and maybe he is drawn a thought too easily to such ostentatiously new word-counters as sprouting, terminus, turbine, artesian, cylinder, tractor, hygiene, cable, calories, pasteurize and clinic, but his heart is evidently in those same everlasting hills, seeking "a new world through old workings":

You that love England, who have an ear for her music,
The slow movement of clouds in benediction,
Clear arias of light thrilling over her uplands,
Over the chords of summer sustained peacefully;
Ceaseless the leaves' counterpoint in a west wind lively,
Blossom and river rippling loveliest allegro,
And the storms of wood strings brass at year's finale:
Listen. Can you not hear the entrance of a new theme?

We can; but when we have read his brilliantly destructive commentaries upon our world between the wars we find them—as all poetic propaganda

tends to be—a little dated. "Make us," he cries, "the wind from a new world", and we echo the aspiration, though sadly aware of the discarded wind-machines rusting among the coteries. But I would not be misunderstood. Mr. Day Lewis is one of the half-dozen most alert and most truly dedicated poets of our time and in this book we may trace some part of his progress towards the eminence he holds today.

Several names known to readers of *Poetry Review* are among the forty-four contributors to the Fortune Forces Anthology. No indication of scheme or editorship appears in the book, which may explain why it gives the air of being hastily contrived. Among the war poems (and they are not as numerous as I had anticipated) Mr. Herbert Corby's "Time in a Blue Prison" would give distinction to any anthology; so too would Mr. Gawsworth's lyric "The World" with its classic concision of form and thought; while Mr. John Waller's generous handful reveals almost equally the merits and defects of his approach to a sensuous world of appearances. Among other contributions Mr. Gavin Ewart's brutally clever "Cigarette for the Bambino" and his attractive version of "Lilli Marleen" will stay in my memory, and I was glad to encounter Mr. James Walker's "Threnody in the Desert" with its mordant conclusion:

> We learned no wisdom; only learned instead
> The importance and the Nothing of the creed
> Within all creeds, prayers, prides, tasks, durances—
> The one essential, the one craven creed:
> "Give us this day our daily bread."
> Give us this day.
> Give.
> And deliver us from this day's evil.

The three books that follow are also by poets of the last war and arrive by their own routes at somewhat similar bitter conclusions. In fact, the story is the same as in the poetry of the first World War, protest and disillusion or, at their most tranquil, a grudging acceptance of ridiculous fate. Nothing of acceptance, however, is to be found in Mr. Harry Milner's *Until Bengal*, which is marred for me by the general indiscipline and blurt of its expression. Our own editor, in his Introduction, is right in detecting an "unfettered" quality in Mr. Milner's language, but moments of anger do not make an Elizabethan, and if he will forget the "mad machine" and the inefficiencies and deficiencies of his fellow-men he will have time to look into his own heart and develop his very decided talent.

Indiscipline is not the note of Mr. Robert Kilian Brady's *Pulp in Bosnia*. He expresses action and protest but with more dignity of spirit and form. His "Night Fighter" has this fine conclusion:

No human wretchedness can mar
The man whose life and passion are
To seek oblivion in the stress
And nightly die to selfishness.

We are told by the publishers that the author of *Graves and Resurrections,* Mr. Vernon Scannell, has held the Northern Universities Boxing Championship at three weights, which may or may not have been mentioned as a deterrent to critics. He is certainly the best of the three war poets I have dealt with and marshals his own particular protest with decision:

At the closing of the time of bitter fighting,
When multitudes are lain beneath the earth,
Observe the calm, unwrinkled face of heaven,
The laughter in the leaves: assess your worth.

But his collection, for all its undeniable air of accomplishment, suggests to me that Mr. Scannell has not yet found himself. There are echoes of the naughty 'Nineties and the would-be-naughty Nineteen-tens in:

your soundless sighs
Echo beneath the lamplight and within
The crystalline content of your genteel gin.

and in:

His eyes that would insist that her white throat,
Scarved in a wisp of blue tobacco-smoke,
Evokes in him tremendous passion . . .

This sinning by lyrical proxy has been done so often!

We owe the publication of the late Eric Clough Taylor's *Poems,* apparently, to Mr. Ronald Fraser who was his colleague in "a rather squalid government department", which I suspect to be the Treasury. There have been plenty of precedents for the practice of poetry by Civil Servants, but evidently Clough Taylor kept his lyric gift to himself as a partial escape from humdrum life in an office. Coming to this sensitive, cultured and reticent mind after the young war poets is like entering a beech wood from the heat of the road. I would not willingly have missed one of the sixty-one poems, but here, for a taste of his quality, is "The Statue of Mercury":

The statue of Mercury stands in the garden;
Though the seasons pass he grows no older,
But we grow older and we grow colder,
And a robin builds in the curve of his shoulder
And our arteries harden.

The statue of Mercury eastwards faces;
But he sees no sunrise, he hears no singing,
But we hear singing—the air is ringing—
And foolish phrases are cloying and clinging;
The robin builds in the strangest places.

Over and over again as I read these scholarly lyrics I found myself thinking of Walter Savage Landor. I can think of no higher praise.

That erudite traditionalist among modern poets, Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein, has cast his three latest poems in a mould of musical form. *Three Sonatas* employ rhymed narrative, dialogue and lyric verse to convey the crux of a human drama of naval life (which Marryat also used), a domestic melodrama of our own time, and an investigation of the inner world of a visionary. Nos. 1 and 2 should be very successful read aloud; they are straightforward, swift in movement and utterly comprehensible at a first hearing. I'm not so sure about No. 3 which seems to be on several planes at once, Coleridgean, Blakean and Old-Kent-Roadean. But throughout the three poems Mr. Meyerstein combines curiously the language of traditional verse with a colloquial briskness.

The last old contemporary on my list, Mr. Kenneth Hare, comes in with his *Gloucestershire* (in 'the County Books' series) purely on account of the inclusion of four of his own poems and discussion of W. H. Davies and James Elroy Flecker, though I can heartily recommend the book itself as a noble guide to a lovely county. Of Mr. Hare's poems I will say that "The Gates" and a ballad of a shepherdess and a merchant's son will probably find their way into the repertory of West Country reciters along with Barnes and Eden Phillpotts; and from his account of a meeting with W. H. Davies I will quote this reply to Hare's question, "When you write a lyric, do you write quickly, or keep it by you and polish it?"

"Sometimes a single line, or two, or three, will dart into my mind. I think them too good to lose, so I keep them, and build up the poem to them. It will be a long while then before the piece is perfected. But the first lines *were essentially* the poem; and the whole thing will be of a piece. At other times, the poem seems to start into my brain practically complete. I remember once, in my bachelor days, putting on an egg to boil, when an idea struck me. It *possessed* me! I ferreted out paper and pencil, and wrote my lyric then and there: literally in the 'boiling of an egg'! Although I'm willing to admit it was an *uncommonly* hard-boiled egg when I came to eat it!" *Thanks for the memory, Mr. Hare.*

PHOENIXES TOO INFREQUENT

The Lady's Not For Burning by Christopher Fry (Oxford University Press, 6s.) ; *The Slow Night* by Christopher Hassall (Arthur Barker Ltd. 7s. 6d.) ; *The Day's Alarm* by Paul Dehn (Hamish Hamilton, 6s.) ; *Need For Speech* by Ursula Wood (Basil Blackwell, 6s.) ; *The Imprisoned Sea* by James Reeves (Editions Poetry London, 5s.).

Reviewed by

P. D. CUMMINS

In such a transitional age as the present, when values, if they are not altogether discarded, are at any rate heavily obscured, and when tortuous invention successfully masquerades as creative imagination, genuine poets are indeed phoenixes too infrequent. Nevertheless they exist, rising not only out of their own ashes but out of the murky conflagration that passes as the true fire. For those who have ears to hear, their notes, however diverse, are unmistakable, and so, since I have misquoted the title of one of his most delectable plays, let us listen first of all to Mr. Christopher Fry.

Mr. Fry's *The Lady's Not For Burning* has now been published by the Oxford University Press and recently produced again in London by John Gielgud, so that those who missed the short run at the Arts will be able to judge for themselves whether this brilliant dialectical achievement is equally brilliant theatre. The plot is slight. Thomas, the disillusioned ex-soldier who falsely accuses himself of murder in order that he may be hanged, falls into "the mantrap of love" with Jennet Jourdemayne, the "witch" who is sentenced to the stake for having supposedly transformed Skipps, the rag and bone man, into a dog. Skipps, however, turns up rip-roaringly drunk, and all's well that ends well: the gentleman's not for the gallows, the lady's not for burning. Put thus briefly, there would appear to be few dramatic possibilities, since there is, in fact, little action, but so glitteringly pointed is the dialogue, so sharply delineated are the characters which enrich the scene—Hebble Tyson, the Mayor, for instance, "fretfully embrangled in the chains of his office," the Chaplain "sweet and uncertain as church-bells on a windy day", Alizon Eliot, the young girl turning to love as a flower to the sun—that the play is excitingly taut and stimulating from start to finish. Christopher Fry is a poet who clothes, for his own delight and ours, modern thought in period dress, and who dazzles us, not only with his verbal invention, but with what is infinitely rarer : his wit. *The Lady's Not For Burning* is beautifully worked out; the noxious cauldron of disillusion and superstition is

brought to the boil, and presto! its horrid contents are rendered both harmless and absurd by the addition of one precious ingredient: laughter. For laughter, as Thomas remarks in the second act,

> " . . . is surely
> The sweet touch of genius in creation."

Just as Mr. Fry invigorates poetry with a wit that seems like a survival from more spacious days, so Mr. Christopher Hassall enhances it with a quality that is in danger of vanishing entirely: elegance. Already, this word rings oddly, yet I must stress it in connection with Mr. Hassall. Contemporary though his subjects are, they are treated with a sculptural precision and dignity which fill the mind with nostalgia for the lost years of grace and tradition. Joan Hassall's gravely beautiful jacket for *The Slow Night* exactly interprets the spirit of her brother's work. There are only 31 poems in this collection, but Mr. Hassall unerringly cuts out every superfluity and reveals the strength of the essential bone structure—essential, I repeat, although too many poets refuse to recognise the necessity for craftsmanship, the result being that their thoughts flop like so many jelly-fish. "Medical", "John Hassall", "Inscription", "Maiden Castle" are perfect examples of Mr. Hassall's art, but these poems are so closely-knit that to quote a mere extract would be to do him very much less than justice; they must be read in their entirety, and require both leisure and contemplation if they are to be appreciated in full.

Mr. Paul Dehn, however, in his first book *The Day's Alarm*, is a poet who instantly takes us emotionally by storm. Here is a mind that has emerged from the crucible of war, not broken, not distorted, but immeasurably strengthened ; a mind that is a sensitive instrument recording terror and pity and senseless cruelty, recording also all things lovely shining the more brightly because of the threatening shadow of destruction. Paul Dehn speaks for all who are aware that their feet are set on shifting sands, who know that there is no security, that everything is slipping, slipping. Take "Spring Song, 1948", for instance:

> "O in the black frost of the world's December,
> In the cold shadow of our stricken years
> Who have small reason, now, to laugh or play,
> Set down, set down that this was a Spring day
> To be remembered with tears,
> If any are left to remember."

or "Armistice"—peace when there was no peace—

> " . . . Before
> Wheat-ear springs green, again, in the green spring

And they are bread in the bodies of the young:
Be strong to remember how the bread died, screaming;
Gangrene was corn, and monuments went mad."

Remember: it is Paul Dehn's keyword. He will not let us fall into the facile oblivion that will betray us to the last despair. *Remember:* but he knows, too, that if we are to have the strength to remember, we must have faith:

"Let there be one belief,
Loved of all men, whose furtherance depends
Only on love; and men will pray aloud
(As I do, now, on the middle night of my life)
Lashing their bodies to the pitching spar
Of peace . . . "

Many of Paul Dehn's poems have appeared in *Time and Tide,* as have those of Miss Ursula Wood. *Need for Speech,* is her third book, and once again her work delights with its freshness, its limpid purity. She is the unforced singer of a pastoral world that knows both the lyric ecstasy of spring and the creeping melancholy of autumn. It is a world that might easily become trite, but Ursula Wood invests it with an originality that is particularly her own, brings to it a perception that is never commonplace. She has the gift of making us see what she sees, feel what she feels, as in 'Afternoon", for instance, when "everybody's home from work" and "the gossips shift from story to story, calling from memory:"

"for the thousandth time words and moods of the past;
they touch the remembered summers of living. Pauses drift
into silence as shadow closes the street.
To-morrow and yesterday meet in the mirror of to-day."

The Imprisoned Sea by James Reeves is disappointing. Clichés such as "freezes the blood" occur too often, and the poems tend to sprawl rather spinelessly. A few are effective, but on the whole we are left with the flat feeling that the majority were written with none of that urgency of inner compulsion which raises the phoenix to immortality.

SHORTER REVIEWS

The Love Letters of Henry VIII, Edited by Henry Savage (Wingate, 9s.); *Selected Poems:* Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edited by Samuel J. Looker; *Selected Poems:* Percy Bysshe Shelley, Edited by John Heath-Stubbs;

Selected Poems of William Blake, Edited by Ruthven Todd; *Selected Poems of Christopher Marlowe*, Edited by Fred Marnau; *Selected Poems of Andrew Marvell*, Edited by Fred Marnau. (Crown Classics: Grey Walls Press, 3s. 6d. each); *Selected Lyrics and Satires*: Rochester, Edited by Ronald Duncan (Forge Press, 7s. 6d).

The Love Letters of Henry VIII is a delightfully produced book which besides Henry's letters contains a most moving farewell from Katharine of Aragon: "lastly, I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things." The love letters themselves are re-translated for the first time and the Vatican texts are given with facsimiles. Henry—besides his vigour as husband and theologian—had considerable gifts as a poet, as anyone who has read Mr. John Gawsworth's *The Muse of Monarchy* (1937) will appreciate; and Anne Boleyn is the putative author of at least one very fine song:

O death! rocke me on sleepe,
Bring me on quiet reste . . .

Mr. Savage's commentary is readable and sympathetic.

The Crown Classics are here again with familiar elegance. Mr. Looker's edition of *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* is a very pleasing volume containing a number of unfamiliar, but satisfying poems. It is notable how, even in her most accomplished work, E.B.B. has a curious indolence of rhyming. Mr. Heath-Stubbs in the introduction to an admirable selection, *Shelley*, considers his poet as an unsuccessful Metaphysical who failed to make a rigorous synthesis of diverse elements in his emotional and intellectual life. As it is, one is left with the majestic ruin, the torso of a great art, in which Hellenism, Platonism and Romanticism are often indiscriminately mingled. Thirty seems an early age at which to demand such rigorous synthesis. It is idle to speculate on what Shelley might have been; but his later poems leave the impression of his slowly gathering a largely unrealised power.

Mr. Todd's *Blake* is—as one might expect—tactfully chosen and illuminatingly introduced. As a specialist in the romantic science and subfusc notions of the 18th century he is obviously well qualified to edit Blake, to whom all such hazards and conclusions were immensely exciting. The only complaint one can make against Mr. Todd is that he writes so lazily. At the beginning of a paragraph we have: "Believing as I do, that Blake is one of the very greatest of all Englishmen, my selection and my comments *upon it* may appear to be unduly personal and to disagree with some of the generally accepted conclusions." Not Mr. Todd's commentary but his grammar offends against "accepted conclusions."

Mr. Marnau sees *Marlowe* as "an angry, violent angel who had come to alter things." He also "gave his contemporaries a shock-treatment of which they stood in great need." His account of Marlowe's death seems to ignore recent scholarship. Mr. Hotson's work on the motives behind Marlowe's assassination should be answered, or at least referred to. I think that the selection might have included something of the Ovidian translation and, if this is not asking too much, perhaps a text a little later than the 1865 one of Alexander Dyce.

I now come—with undisguised relish—to what is surely the worst edited book of the last fifty, or even hundred years. Messrs. Grosart and W. C. Hazlitt, emendators on the heroic scale, at least gave us a text which bore some relation, however tenuous, to its original. But the science of emendation was only slumbering. In Mr. Marnau's *Marvell* it reaches what is surely its consummation. If any reader has the time, perhaps he might like to compare, as I did, the text of *The Garden, To His Coy Mistress* and *The Horatian Ode* according to Mr. Marnau, with Marvell's *Poems* (1681) and the recent text of Mr. Margoliouth. From a riotous garland of errors I take the following:

> Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
> Withdraws into its happiness.

"Withdraws" becomes "withdrawn" in Mr. Marnau's edition. Then "*combs* its silver wings", in the same poem becomes "*claps* its silver wings", and "adventrous war" becomes "adventures warre". If Mr. Marnau is in possession of new MSS. why does he not declare it? Nor does Mr. Marnau stop at judicious substitution. Where his poet has failed to make the sense clear he repunctuates with a forcible subtlety all his own.

> And yonder all before us lye.
> Desarts of vast Eternity.

I could go on *ad nauseam*. I can only suggest to the publishers that if they paid as much attention to the inside of their books as they do to the outside it would be a good thing for all concerned.

In no other civilised country than England, I am sure, would such a fine poet as Rochester have been allowed to remain so long in the twilight of the "out of print". This edition is well enough selected and the only complaint one can make against it is the fact that it has been fashioned on such a slender scale. Mr. Duncan in a sane introduction plays the part of defending Counsel with gusto. Rochester must be one of the finest poets not generally read and this little book should give us all a chance of doing so. Not only as a lyric poet, but also as a princely Satirist, he deserves the closest attention.

IAIN FLETCHER

"*Oxford Poetry 1948*" Edited by Arthur Boyars and Barry Harmer. (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 3s. 6d.)

It was a quiet year in Oxford. The war was forgotten. The young men and women were rosy-eyed. There was no concern with politics or with the Atom Bomb. The sun was shining on the quiet river and one had a feeling that goldfish were swimming in it. The boys and girls were wandering hand in hand in Port Meadow. If they thought at all it was of comfortable jobs in the Civil Service. There would be honey for tea, one imagines, and love was a lot of jolly tinkling words floating among the still colleges . . .

This is the impression received from *Oxford Poetry 1948*, an apparently mediocre year with few poets who are likely to be heard of again. There is much to censure. Mr. Bingham's mists roll "whitely-wetly" and his ducks go "wiggle-waggle". Miss Bonsor has "memories walled up" and Miss Boulton an "immobile rose". Mr. Davie mentions the "anchorage of all my fugitive hopes". Mr. Hewish asks his suburban children to:

> " . . . burn, burn, burn,
> Flare to the stars."

Mr. Lloyd asks:

> "What was our sin? Excess of love, excess
> Of passion?"

Mr. O'Donnell talks of "the crystal days' unhurried grist" and of the "air's blind acreage." Mr. Pim who has heard of the thirties introduces "callous hands" and "listless cigarettes". Mr. Robinson who has heard of Keats exclaims: "Oh, magic magic casements!" And Mr. Taylor's ladies have a try with "All the expedients of love."

If one is young, one must surely be moved, must surely have something to write about? Alas, poor Oxford, that does not know where poetry is going but is trying to grow artificial flowers among the slush of the last four decades! Alas indeed!

Exceptions to the foregoing are Oliver Bayley's masterly "Salammbo" and adroit "The Taster", the patient Arthur Boyars' "Kleisthenes" and "Dialogue in Limbo", Geoffrey Dutton's simple "A Girl on Sunday", Michael Hamburger's careful "Consider Oedipus", Barry Harmer's oddly attractive "Cosmogony", William Jay Smith's smooth "The Wooing Lady" and perhaps a few others. These were worth writing.

The Editors have written an oddly conceited foreword to so indifferent a vintage. They are also under the impression that Rupert Brooke was a soldier. He was a sailor.

JOHN WALLER

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

In Mr. Philip Lindsay's article *Poetry in Australasia* (i) he says Adam Lindsay Gordon was not an Australian. When Gordon landed in Adelaide in 1853 the State of South Australia (of which Adelaide is the capital) was only seventeen years old. Who were Australians in that State at that time? Were not many of the emigrants then lonely, and homesick exiles like Gordon? His body now lies in Australian soil. Mr. Lindsay also says Gordon expressed nothing of the spirit of the country. As a "mounty" in the police his work brought him in touch with gold diggers and bushmen; and his steeplechasing prowess made him acquainted with the squatters, and with life in the cities. Does not his poem "The Patrol and the Gold Digger" give a vivid picture of the men who went into the outback and found the gold, which has helped to make Australia rich? Mr. Lindsay says Gordon "plundered" the galloping rhythms of his poetry from Sir Walter Scott. If there was any influence, was it not Browning and Swinburne? Finally, Mr. Lindsay must have forgotten that it is not Gordon who "shouts" those lines "I would live the same life over", but it is the old bushman speaking. It is indeed the very soul of those hard living, hard working men of the outback (some of whom I met in Central Australia) which Gordon has expressed in that poem "The Sick Stockrider", in which that line occurs.

Yours,

THEODORA ROSCOE.

Dear Sir,

While there is much to be admired in Mr. Roy Campbell's review of *The Complete Poems of Richard Aldington,* I feel his provocative remarks on "the conventions of rhyme and metre" should not go unchallenged.

It is, and has been for centuries, the accepted opinion that Milton was far too comprehensive in his denunciation of rhyme; that he should have been satisfied to have "recovered ancient liberty to heroic poem"; however, he spoke up for metre, while Mr. Campbell gibes at both rhyme and metre, thus leaving only rhythm as a means of discriminating between prose and poetry. A test that very little *free* blank verse would stand is to write it as prose and then ask an impartial person to divide it into the lines in which it appeared in print.

Mr. Aldington's long poems, says his reviewer, are formed "like crystals, of smaller crystals, each of which is a separate whole, brief and crisp as an epigram". Surely, that would be more applicable to the late Lord Derwent's poem "Shubra" than to any of Mr. Aldington's poems in

which there is an absence of rhyme and metre, for the feature that distinguishes crystals from other forms of matter is their symmetry and that quality is not sought in free verse. As "Shubra" and many other fine poems preceded Mr. Roy Campbell's article in your April-May issue, the evidence they supplied of the virtues of rhyme and metre, negatived in advance his scathing remarks on those two matters.

Yours,

HOWARD PARSONS.

Sir,

I am a new member of the Poetry Society, and young. This does not deter me from wishing to disagree most forcibly with the letter written to you by Mr. Brett, and published in your last issue, in his criticism of "Lied".

With the first two paragraphs of his letter I am in accord. It was therefore an unpleasant surprise to see that he continued what was so well begun with his undeserving blame of Mrs. Roseveare's "Lied" which is powerful, and which, above all, has form. The question your correspondent raises, however, by his criticism is a considerably wider one. He is probably unaware of it. It is to me a sign that poetry has become a second-rate thing, lacking not only inspiration, but also the dignity of craftsmanship. Apparently anyone to-day can write something and call it a poem. Be it shapeless and flabby, clouded with obscure adjectives (often hyphenated), let it touch a little on the disgusting, and it is acclaimed in literary circles as poetry. It is a sign of regression that we must in all honesty hail past poets as great, while to-day offers only bleakness. We excuse this as force of circumstance. That is not true. A poet will write poetry whether he is peeling potatoes or firing guns. To-day, when the word poetry has lost all meaning, when it is cluttered and clouded with a Victorian overloading and ornamentation of adjective, untutored, undisciplined, to-day when obliquity is hailed as genius, I—and I feel I am not alone in this—am grateful for vigorous, disciplined poems like "Lied". It is not technically perfect. Few poems are. Critics like Ivor Brown and Randall Swingler have long since denounced this modern (?) fondness for obscurity. They are a jump ahead of the poets.

I quote M. de Lamartine through another of your correspondents: "Poetry is man himself, his instincts; it is the inner echoing of human desires, thoughts and emotions: . . . " Formidable! What poor muddle headed creatures we must be.

I close with a word of gratitude to the author of "Lied".

Yours,

PHILLIPPA BERLYN.

THE 1948 SHIRLEY CARTER LEIGH GREENWOOD POEM COMPETITION: REPORT AND AWARD

BY

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

There was, finally, no lack of entries: even if late, they came rolling in by the hundred, a fairly typical cross-section of the verse which is being written to-day. I would like to pay my homage to much sincere work. It would be a disservice, however, to judge by any but a high standard, and by any such standard I cannot find the general level impressive. Some of the writing is pretentious, or merely incompetent: a good deal of it shows a degree of accomplishment, but has little vitality: a small proportion is real poetry. Some poets who have published good work submitted pieces which hardly do them justice. I must add that, while many competitors took trouble to present their work in clear manuscript or typescript—and I thank them for it—many others served it up in a most unpalatable form, badly written or poorly typed, with obvious errors uncorrected. This is unfair to the judge, whose task is heavy enough at best.

Fortunately there are one or two outstanding poems. I have no hesitation in recommending that the Greenwood Prize be awarded to Robert Gittings for his narrative poem "Acis and Galatea." It has a blessed quality which many of the entries lacked; the light, now of fancy, now of imagination, instead of being lost in the abstract, the vague, the infinite void, invests with clear space and shining atmosphere objects that have a realised form, a definite outline. A number of competitors have wandered among the doubtful moonbeams of a pseudo-Shelleian heaven. What real experience do they represent or create? Honesty forces me to say that I have found these exaltations, most of them, very depressing. I am reminded of T. E. Hulme: though I strongly dissent from many of his views, at least he was right in his protest, nearly forty years ago, against the woolly kind of cosmic verse. The need for such a protest remains with us to-day and will, I imagine, persist.

Far be it from me to suggest that the poet should not attempt lofty themes and risk a fall—provided he can bring to them a *shaping* imagination. But his masters in the English tradition should teach him not to despise lesser themes. Mr. Gittings does not give us heights or depths to probe. He is content with an old classical tale, and brings it to life with admirable freshness and ease of control. The first thing I want to say about his poem—vivid to the eye, musical to the ear—is, very simply, that it gives great enjoyment.

The narrative is straightforward and beautifully proportioned. In his use of the long 'fourteener' line Mr. Gittings shows remarkable skill, and manages his variations nicely. He hardly falters, except in the opening lines of the final stanza which, to my ear, have a certain flatness and fall into prose-rhythm. The language throughout is untroubled and natural: he is not afraid of the poetic word, and does not strain either to be poetical or to bind himself to the speech of every day. Instead, there is an easy commerce between the picturesque—

Her lashes, pale anemones that curl towards the light

and the plain fabric of pedestrian words—

arbitrary time
Servant of computation and the working-hours of men.

The poet has to keep his eye not only on the object (as is commonly said) but also on the word; and, unless he has a fair mastery of expression, the word will distract him instead of illuminating—and, in a measure, transfiguring the object. Mr. Gittings has an easy technique which it must have been difficult to acquire. It enables him to concentrate sufficiently on the presentation of a scene which he has realised in broad effect and can examine minutely. How excellent, for example, is the picture of Polyphemus, both as he first appears, and then as his huge bulk leans over towards the lovers—where, for Acis, "only the tiny objects near at hand are true."

The reader will find many felicities of detail. It will suffice to call particular attention to one. Any bird-lover must be familiar with the appearance of a heron, when the long neck sinks down and merges with the curve of the body: here it provides an original and striking image for the shepherd's mother—

His mother's heron shoulders that were hunched above his cradle.

It is as good as W. H. Davies on the robin, "that little hunchback in the snow." It is delightful and unforgettable.

* * * * *

Second, I would place Maurice Carpenter's "Vision of the Triumph of Anarchy." The style is up to the minute, a somewhat metallic style in danger of hardening quickly into convention. Yet Mr. Carpenter employs it to good effect. The poem has a fine exuberance, and is full of exciting imagery: staccato, extravagant, with little warmth, little ease, but much brilliance and a strong imaginative impulse. Once or twice he is merely violent, but he repeatedly shows a true force and vividness of phrase. I am puzzled by his word "nimonic" which I cannot find in the Oxford Dictionary. I am puzzled, too, by the last line of his poem—what is "this green" that "shall heal the rift"? The recurring *green* in the poem, e.g. "The government of green, anarch of greed", is far from suggesting any healing power. And the enthusiast has a debt to accuracy, which Mr. Carpenter, though sometimes beautifully exact, does not always pay.

Take his first stanza—"the raucous cry Of jay and starling crackles in the sky" is excellent: but why, a few lines lower, "lithe as a lemur morning"? The lemur is a typically nocturnal creature. These may be minor points: they are only worth making because the poem has true quality and exceptional promise. It wins my ungrudging admiration.

P. D. Cummins has written a very moving tribute in her lines "For Hugh Dormer." But it is not altogether as poetry that they move me. There is no lack of discipline here, but in the imagery I miss that element of surprise which—though it be quiet surprise—poetry should communicate. Mrs. Cummins has set herself a peculiarly difficult task, for her poem takes the form of a reflective commentary on phrases or sentences from Dormer's diaries. There is beauty of cadence: there are dignity of thought and sincere depth of emotion. Yet I feel that the matter of the poem has not sunk down into those reaches below the conscious level, where thought, emotion and sensuous image are fused: fused so as to create an experience which—though closely related to the original impulse—is yet different, with the achieved difference of poetry.

Many short poems were submitted. Among them I single out for special commendation Stanley Snaith's "Adder's Tongue." It has a more limited achievement than those which I have discussed above, but its truth and quietness are very satisfying.

* * * * *

The work of William Bliss and that of Lionel F. Goldsmid have grace and good craftsmanship. There are several other pieces of distinction which, if not wholly successful, contain striking or felicitous passages. Here I speak with less confidence, for a good case might be made for a number of entries. But, as my own preference, I may mention poems by Frances Bellerby, Elisabeth Cluer, Iain Fletcher, Stanley Gardner, George Moor, Clive Sansom, and Margaret Stanley-Wrench.

Among the short poems, though none of them are so good as Stanley Snaith's, I like those of Oliver Davies, Noel Heaton and Wilfrid Thorley.

THE 1948 GREENWOOD PRIZE POEM

ACIS AND GALATEA

BY

ROBERT GITTINGS

When life was in its cradle-age, and earth an infant place,
With golden sand, and golden sun, and golden hair, and gold
Everywhere for the taking, in that time a golden race
Lived in a land of harvest where the hills alone were old.
Purple and green the vineyards plunged in torrents to the sea,

Where ocean like a bursting grape exploded with its wine
In ferment on the streaming rocks, and deluged to the knee
The peasant on the spiral path with spatters of white brine.

A peasant? As he brushes back a lock of hair that sun
And sea have bleached to early salt, and wipes the sweat away
From forehead brown as chestnut, does he seem to be as one
Whose feet are clogged with poverty and the treadmill of each day?
No: for in his day man could live without devouring man;
Labour was fair division then; contentment was the aim,
Not emulation. He, the willing shepherd for his clan,
Herded at ease the stonecrop sheep, and Acis was his name.

Long-limbed in goatskin, up he goes the boulder track, and while
The sea falls shorter now his legs are laced by sturdy flowers
Rooted in lizard crevices, to mark with coloured tile
The sloping cliff-wall:—vetch and hanging scabious, violet showers
Splashed on the stone, then purple iris tongued with yellow meal,
Pinks, and the red convolvulus, and poppy's crumpled head
Battered by sunlight to a wound whose scarlet cannot heal,
And bitter ever-present thyme beneath his sandalled tread.

Onward and upward let him go, and let him not turn back
The sidelong of Sicilian eyes to where the dizzy foam
Spins now a rainbow bridge below the slanting sunbeam track,
The seadrop's veiled deception. Let him go home, go home
To where the kidsflesh in the pot and milk in wooden ladle
Stand ready in the wattle hut beneath the trellised vines,
His mother's heron shoulders that were hunched above his cradle,
Black-shawled around a face that maps a continent of lines.

Better look there than backward, though the sea should drape a sleeve
Of beauty over pointed rocks that tore the fisher's skein,
And golden hair should slowly rise where wrack and seaweeds weave—
Look to your home, young Acis, harvest in the oil and grain
Your father left you, and when she as well lies waxen-still,
Bury your mother in the cairn beside the hurdled cot,
Go to the village where they dance beneath the torchlit hill,
And take one who will bear your name, your children, and your lot.

Do not look back to where the sudden silence of the sea
Strikes on the ear with stronger force than clamour did before,
As if some wavebound creature, in its struggle to be free,
Had sucked the whirlpool down, then sent it up, to climb and roar

Into the rock-cleft, then itself, like stillness in the wake
Of storm, was rising through the coral kingdoms, calm and slow,
Nearly awash now in the glassy emerald inlet lake,
Almost above the water-level—Acis, do not go,

Do not turn back, do not leap down the steps, remember first
Those cradle-stories rooted in maternal fear and care,
Legend of singing cave and siren shore, and of the worst
Death of all deaths, forgetfulness of how one lives or where,
The sailor or the shepherd, lost to country, home, or sound
Of family, mother, wife, drowned in the green-blue sea-glint eyes
Of watermaiden floating upward, white as if she were drowned,
Except the long gold tresses that on little wavelets rise.

He leaps down. Pebbles slide before him, tumbling on below
Like dwarfs to see their mistress. Who is she, and is she dead
That thus seems waterborn? Or living, is she human, so
White, so pale-veined, and that great yellow oriole round her head?
His feet speed with these questions. Up above, the clumsy sheep
Crop stupidly. In lower arc the eagles wheel and coast,
Taking their predatory note—no shepherd near to keep
Their shadow off the singled lamb—for Acis too is lost,

Lost on his knees beside the stranger, drawn by her to kneel
Level with lapping wavebeats, laying head against her heart
To hear what stirs there; finding, miracle to touch and feel,
Heat in the ash of paleness, warmth in every seawashed part
Of her who seemed the prey of waters, till, at quivering length,
Her lashes, pale anemones that curl towards the light,
Separate, trembling, lid from lid, and all his bending strength,
Bowed over her, becomes as weak as childhood at the sight.

Lost in the sea-maid's arms, he neither knows, nor asks, nor cares
Who she may be, what she may be; and she alone supplies
Between her warming lips one answer, "Galatea"; hears
Him murmur only, "Acis", and then binds him with her kiss,
Her arms, and last her canopy of sun-dried hair that veils
The weak-eyed and superfluous world from all that they may do,
The blindness of the lovers, not to themselves, but to all else,
The rest of life a zero when the sum of life is two.

Noon cannot strike them, nor the offshore breeze, nor tumbling sea
Below, nor sun above. They lie, like secrecy itself,
Under the chalky jaw-bone of the cliff-face, where the bee

Finds all sweet flowers that ever grew, stored on a honey shelf;
And so they find, and find again, till arbitrary time,
Servant of computation and the working-hours of men,
Ceases to count, as they have ceased to care, an endless mime
Of wordless love, acting all modes of life in every scene.

He is all men. For him, because she is the first of loves
He has encountered, he too must be the first for her—or if
Not quite the first, as even love's dumb exploration proves,
He is the only present one, her body's hieroglyph
Decipherable to no touch but his own; and she denies
Nothing of this, says nothing but such answer as his fire
Best can appreciate, while with far-off open green-blue eyes
She widens ocean vistas and horizons of desire.

Nothing is said. What warning can be said, when ears will not
Listen, tongue will not speak it? Even eagles, gorging hard
On the black fly-pocked lamb, are warned, and leave the wool-marked spot
Hurriedly into the darkening air, wing-loosed, alert, and scared
By danger's step, the heavy foot that thuds the turf, the voice
Muttering idiot sheepcalls from a mouth that laps the stream
Animal-fashion. All but the lovers recognize that noise,
Half-savage guardian of the rockhead, monster Polypheme.

Windmill enlargement, made of whirling arms and stumbling legs,
His evening shadow falls across the heath. His lolling head,
Squinting one-eyed under a muddy hedge of hair that begs
No barber to reveal what scowls behind its palisade,
Leads him this way; with purpose here his shoulders swing and bob,
His feet have one determined path, his brain one firm idea,
Whose fixedness no finger of intelligence can rob,
With sullen dusk of huge desire to see his Galatea.

His—for although their nearnesses had never yet been more
Than water's brink to cliff-top's height, yet he had gazed, and she
Unable or unwilling to resist attention, or
For much less cause, inquisitive chance, or inborn vanity,
Once had looked up at him; from which his puzzled tortoise thought
Had followed its slow footprints of conclusion, to arrive
Possessor, more than fact could make, of passions terribly fraught,
Jealousies only known to those whom jealousy keeps alive.

Acis knows none of this, nor how, above, the monster leans
And gibbers, swinging outward on a bowsprit olive bough
Beyond the rockface, glaring down desperate to find the means
To win one upward glance again. This Acis does not know.
For him, only the tiny objects near at hand are true,
A bronze and verdant beetle or a lizard flickering by,
Gold down of hairs inside an elbow river-veined with blue,
The presence of a heartbeat, the persistence of a sigh.

But Polypheme both hears and sees a concord different from
The clash of waves, a stranger warmer whiteness than the shape
Of seaworn stone, a movement on the beach that sends a scum
Of yellow fury boiling in his cauldron skull, the ape
Anger, climbing the topmost branch of hate, to maim or kill.
Howling, he tears the olive from its roots, and at the shock
The cliff-head splits. As sure as if he aimed, with horrible skill
Straight for the supine lovers slides an avalanche of rock.

She, on her back, can see a second earlier; in a flash
Instinct abandons newborn love for ancient terror. She
Slips from beneath his body's danger, diving, with a splash
Unheard among the approaching thunder, seal-like into the sea.
He has no chance. One look behind, one fruitless cry for help,
And down the mountain comes on him, the dark enchanter's cap
Snuffing and crushing instantly, to mortar with his pulp
The new-made sea-mark that the pilot now must learn to map.

Dust rises from his solid grave; the ninepin-rolling stones
Block every cranny. Only from one small cleft a trickle shoots
Quick and in colour like the early purple orchis, once
Plucked on the sheepwalks of his boyhood; down it creeps and clots
Into the sanded water, spreads, diffused and pale, descends
To where the chalky froth now only half-reveals a form
Sinking, as white as once it rose. The blood of Acis sends
An everlasting kiss to her whose body still is warm.

For Galatea, what she takes underseas with her, who knows?
Fatal against her will, and yet the only one who has
Her will. For Polypheme with bellowing strides of anguish goes
Stricken away, shocked into knowing what has come to pass
Now severs all his hope from her. He cannot be at peace.
Acis lies dead. Upon the altered promontory soon
The scarecrow mother will appear with unavailing cries.
Mourning a son whose monument is built before her own.

THE PREMIUM AWARD

"Poetry which is more difficult to read than to write". When Mr. Roy Campbell wrote this, with the good-humoured trenchancy that was characteristic of his article in the last issue of *The Poetry Review*, he might have been describing in anticipation all too many of the latest entries for the Premium award!

In a tangle of words the theme is usually lost entirely, and although my task of choosing what in my opinion is the best poem has been consequently difficult in some ways it was also simplified. The winner began in a way that looked ominous; but "After Long Winters" came through with only two other pieces to challenge it.

Therefore Mrs. J. H. Loudoun-Shand takes £5 of the award, and Miss Margaret Howard, with "Reading Philosophy in a Flower-filled Room" and Mr. John Wheatley, with "Prologue to Poetry", in spite of a questionable eighth line, share the remaining £5 between them.

I wish poets would more severely test each line in their compositions—and sometimes their grammar—allowing nothing even slightly doubtful to pass at any price! "Don't smother me, don't set my teeth on edge", ought not to have appeared in the final version of one serious effort, nor in another, "the misery and pain of *he* whose mind must analyse his life".

THOMAS MOULT

HIGHLY COMMENDED

M. Boulton, Stafford.
N. K. Cruikshank, Suffolk.
Joyce Evelegh, Folkestone.
Sophia Rawlins, Kensington.
Peter Russell, London, W.1.
Janet Urquhart, London, N.W.2.

COMMENDED

D. L. Bowen, Knighton.
Horatia Calverley, London, S.W.1.
E. B. W. Chappelow, Blackheath.
G. W. Coutie, Edinburgh.
E. A. Cullabine, Worksop.
Andrew Keith, Stroud.
Eric Knight, Barnt Green.
D. P. Kirtlan, Trowbridge.
Phil Leverington, Haywards Heath.
Cynthia Palmer, Huntington.
W. Pearson-Jones, London, S.E.24.
Lt.-Col. W. T. Shorthose, Angola.
Joan Southey, London, S.W.12.
N. G. Strong, Tunbridge Wells.

AFTER LONG WINTERS

After long winters fraught with frenzied gales,
She brooded upon coffins, coffin nails,
And hearing, in the cold room as she stood,
The rhythmic hammer on the virgin wood,
Conceived, she knew, a new grave in earth's womb,
And read her name new-written on the tomb.

She loved the Spring. She wished not yet to die,
With the decayed or crumbling bones to lie,
To wither in old vaults; to hear the low
Mournful dull platitudes of friends in slow
Hushed even words: "A great age", or, "Alone
She lived in that huge barrack, cold as stone,
Old as the centuries", "Such a relief",
"A landmark gone". Kind words to cancel grief.

Alone? she laughed. The curtains' draughty stir,
The hob-song of her tabbies sang for her,
Made music in her winter. Through the halls
Down floated echoes. She heard children's calls
Shrill to each other and their dogs; the strum
Of youth's pianos; tumbling mummers come,
Wine-boisterous at Christmas, loud with rhymes.
In candled galleries her childhood mimes
Took shape; she felt excitement, and the press
Of sisters trying on an ancient dress,
Ribboned and rustling; saw through murky rooms
Cracked mirrors catch reflections gold, in glooms
Of attics seldom-rummaged. Through the air
She heard her mocking brothers on the stair.

Cold as a stone? She knew the warmth of Spring
When love, uncertain, perilous, came to sing
Over the hills to her, and told old tales
Marvellous of stubborn rocks, forbidden vales,
Caverns bewitched, and strange dark pirate seas,
Dim seal-enchanted isles, dark warrior trees
Gaunt sentinels to guard the faery West.
She knew the warmth of Spring, and she was blest.

And she remembered Summer, settled down;
The whistling mowers; and the waving brown
Sorrel, cow-swished in meadows great with heat;
Beneath the cooling limes the gentle sweet
Exchange of seldom, and of soothing words;
Sweet briar in the lane; the intimate birds;
The purposeful, and busy drone of bees;
The green perfections stately of the trees,
(Horse-chestnuts washed with rain); the clumps of musk;
Philomel's secrets bursting through the dusk.

Old Autumns, clad in splendid disarray,
Shone clear as her familiar yesterday.
She followed all the little silken trails
Blazed on wet roads by shy determined snails;
The juicy berries, black as tinkers' eyes;
The whirl of feckless leaves; the brittle skies,
Cloud over wood, or wisp above the wold;
The hunter sniff the morning, stamping, bold.
She knew each petal, and each gaudy bloom,
The ancient spider hastening at his loom,
And traced the hedgerow footpath to the stile
With measuring eye mile on familiar mile.

Reflecting on the seasons' cycle, she
Brooded no longer darkly. Bud on tree,
The skimming swallows homing from the South,
The blatant poppies at the cornfield's mouth
Returned each year in glory, and they were
Hallowed in resurrection, lovelier.
And so she smiled, beneath the evening yews
Walking, to see the sexton, deep in dews
Of grass unkempt, digging and shifting soil,
Singing a broad song at his evening's toil.

So she then knew, believed, and understood
The body dies not, though confined in wood,
And melting flesh, and dry and withered bones
Loose the free spirit to immortal zones,
To dwell unseen in some all-hallowed place,
Tranquil with faith, and lulled with endless grace.

J. H. Loudoun-Shand

READING PHILOSOPHY IN A FLOWER-FILLED ROOM

What had I gained from that great wealth of words?
The generations burn their candlelight
In search of Truth, yet every glimmer throws
Another emphasis upon the night.

And then upon my page I felt the flowers,
As if they'd crossed the room to speak to me.
How could I read when one small blossom holds
Such worlds of beauty and of mystery?

Margaret Howard

PROLOGUE TO POETRY

Oh, do not enter lightly by this gate,
This arch of words, into a land of dream.
Do not imagine that we imitate
The things that are, nor yet the things that seem.
Do not seek purpose here, nor any clue
To that old riddle that the stars have set.
We do not come between the stars and you.
Ask them their meaning. We know, but we forget.

It is adventure, and you should not cross,
Unknowingly, this other Rubicon,
But come prepared for infinite gain or loss,
To suffer change, and end what is begun.
Our land is boundless, and its ways are strange.
Our seas are shoreless, and their tide is change.

JOHN WHEATLEY

THE POETRY SOCIETY

Founded February 24, 1909 :: Incorporated June 18, 1923

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary,
General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

(*The Annual Subscription becomes due and renewable on the completion of one year from the date of joining. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to The Poetry Society.*)

Name .....

Address.....

.....

Date.....

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following subscribers to the Fund inaugurated on the occasion of the retirement of Mr. Galloway Kyle, formerly Director of the Poetry Society, are acknowledged, in addition to the list of names published in previous issues of *The Poetry Review:*

R. B. Abrahams; Mrs. Christine Henderson; Miss A. V. Stuart.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: SOCIAL MEETING

A Social Meeting for Members of the Centres will be held at 33 Portman Square, W.1, on Saturday, June 25th, at 2.15 p.m.

Secretaries of Centres are asked to read short reports of their activities and arrange poetry recitals by their members.

Admission 2s., including tea. Will Members kindly apply for tickets not later than June 14th?

THE POETRY HOUR AT 33 PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1

Friday, June 10 at 6.15. *PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY*
A Talk by J. Isaacs, M.A.

Friday, June 17 at 6.15. *PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY*
A programme of his Poems.

THE HAMPSTEAD POETRY CENTRE

Programme of Meetings to be held at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3, by invitation of Miss Margaret Huntsman, Hon. Secretary, on first and third Thursdays from 8 to 9.30 p.m.

June 16. Poems by Members or any Modern Poets.
July 7. The Arts.
„ 21. Favourite Poems.

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE POETRY CENTRE

June 11 2.45 p.m. A talk on *Contemporary Polish Poets* by Mrs. F. Notley. Mrs. E. Ward, Kynance, Manor Road. Penn. 2177.

July 9 2.45 p.m. *Poems of 20th Century,* with introduction by Miss E. D. Bangay. Mrs. I. D. Singer, Copse Hill, Kingswood Road. Penn. 2176.

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines, continually increases.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the final award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges or private individuals.

AUDITIONS COMMITTEE

Miss E. M. Cattell
Miss K. Cracroft (Gen. Sec. & Registrar)
John Graddon (*ex-officio*)
Leigh Henry, Ph.D.
John Holgate
Miss M. Lyon
E. Guy Pertwee
T. W. Ramsey, F.R.S.L. (*ex-officio*)
Miss R. Shuttleworth

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1949

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editor, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review.*

Closing date is 31st December, 1949.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the offer of £10 in prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review,* 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review.*
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 15th July, 1949.

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope, as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, to reach here not later than 1st March, 1950. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

THE POETRY SOCIETY JUNIOR VERSE COMPETITION

The Poetry Society have pleasure in announcing an annual Junior Verse Competition. Schools throughout the country are invited to co-operate in submitting the work of their pupils.

The Competition will be divided into two classes:

(*a*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age up to thirteen years last birthday. There will be a book prize inscribed by the Poetry Society.

(*b*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age from fourteen to seventeen years last birthday. There will be a book prize, inscribed by the Poetry Society and four additional prizes of one year's Membership to the Poetry Society.

The poem may be on any subject. Closing date, 30th June, 1949. Entries to be addressed to: The Junior Verse Competition, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear the names and addresses of competitors and copies should be retained as these cannot be returned.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1949

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the third Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4

The prize of £10 may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator; the winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1949. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

POEMS OF PLACE COMPETITION FOR 1950

Mrs. A. Dorothy Holmes, a Shropshire member of The Poetry Society, offers £10 annually in competition for poems of place. Competitors who must be members of The Poetry Society, may submit not more than two poems, previously unpublished, of not more than 100 lines. All entries should be typewritten and bear the name and address of the author; poems should be addressed to "The Holmes Prize", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, not later than 1st April, 1950. The judges may divide the prize money at their discretion, and the winning poem or poems may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors are asked to keep copies of their entries as these cannot be returned.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.